

Shifts in Regular Music Programming: Engaging Grade 3 Boys in the Singing Process

A Thesis

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Abstract

The purpose of this teacher action research study was to explore how regular music programming in rural South-Central Manitoba could be designed to foster engagement in singing in grade 3 boys. Participants included ten grade 3 boys in two mixed-gender classes of Grade 3 General Music and one mixed gender class of Grade 2/3 General Music. Data sources included two initial surveys, feedback loop sessions, researcher journaling, and peer interviews. Findings indicated the following effective interventions for engaging grade 3 boys in singing: including students in the repertoire selection process, incorporating student interests into the selection of musical repertoire, accompanying songs on the guitar, drums, and piano, and incorporating male role models into the teaching of singing. Other effective interventions included: selecting songs with a strong beat and rhythmic interest, incorporating movement, incorporating singing games, providing opportunities for student creativity, incorporating humour, incorporating current music, choosing songs with appealing texts, and providing opportunities for rhythmic speech. Selecting repertoire that was challenging, but not too challenging, was also found to be an effective intervention.

Keywords: Grade 3, boys, singing, engagement, general music

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Engaging boys in singing in general elementary music classes can be a struggle for music teachers in schools. It is well-documented in the North-American context that boys have more negative attitudes toward singing activities and music class than girls (Broquist, 1961; Crawford, 1972; Hale, 2006; Mizener, 1990; Nolin, 1973; Pineda, 2017; Taylor, 2009; Sherban, 1995). A large part of early years music experience is rooted in singing, with Specific Learning Outcome 1.1 in the Province of Manitoba Music Curriculum Framework based around singing for students in kindergarten through grade 8 (Government of Manitoba, 2011). The lack of engagement of young boys in singing can lead to behaviour issues and lowered self-concept for boys in general music classes (Sherban, 1995). These negative associations with music can cause a lack of interest in music programming for boys in middle years and high school (Hale, 2006; Mizener, 1990; Taylor, 2009). Conversely, positive musical experiences can foster engagement in singing and prevent behavior problems stemming from student discontent (Jones, 2014). These positive experiences can, in turn, influence boys' decisions to participate in choir in later grades and into adulthood (Adler, 2002; Bennetts, 2013; Bourne, 2009; Freer, 2007; Nolin & Vander Ark, 1977; Svengalis, 1978).

Manitoba has a long-standing choral tradition and is hailed as the "Singing Province" (Manitoba Choral Association, 2018). However, many mixed gender choral programs in Manitoba and across Canada maintain low male membership and struggle with the recruitment of male singers (Adler, 2012). Over the last century in the broader North American context, the number of boys in choral programs has become much lower than that of girls (Adler, 2002, 2012; Freer, 2007; Gates, 1989; Koza, 1993).

Singing is important for both boys and girls. It allows students to be part of something that is only possible when people work together. Through choral singing, students learn teamwork, listening skills, and the ability to work for delayed rewards (Adler, 2002). Adler, a choral educator from Ontario, claims that if students discontinue singing “we risk losing a valuable part of our culture, with links to our cultural history and those of other cultures” (p. 6).

Adler continues:

Choral singing represents a cooperative, creative, expressive force within schools with meanings that vary student to student. Choral singing in schools also supports students to develop their naturally occurring musicianship to each of their best potentials, in a way that is economically equitable and accessible to students of all academic ability levels. (p. 7)

The commonly held view that singing is a feminine pursuit discourages many boys from taking part in choral activities (Adler, 2002; Harrison, 2008). These boys are disadvantaged because they miss the opportunity to participate in the choral arts, therefore losing potential growth opportunities (Adler). Harrison describes a societal shift in which more females are demonstrating male attributes and preferences, often to the point of giving up their participation in choirs because it is considered a feminine pursuit (Gates, 1989; Green, 1997). These females are also disadvantaged by society’s expectations, missing valuable choral opportunities because of what society says are acceptable female attributes.

This teacher action research study took place in a mixed gender context. It investigated ways that general music programming could be designed to engage grade 3 boys in singing in rural South-Central Manitoba for the benefit of all students. This study is written from the post-feminist view that both males and females are disadvantaged by the present-day gender expectations and stereotypes (Adler & Harrison, 2004). Even though data generation and

analysis for this study focused on males, the researcher worked to be conscious of changes made to music programming and their impact on both male and female students.

A lack of engagement or feeling of being unsuccessful in singing can cause young boys to act out in choral activities, thus frustrating their female counterparts (Sherban, 1995) and the teacher. The researcher has noticed how active male engagement and participation in singing helps support learning and engagement in girls. Being mindful that any changes made to regular music programming should not work to the detriment of girls (Koza, 1993), the researcher planned activities that appealed to the preferences, interests, and learning needs of both genders. However, only data from male students were analyzed and reported as findings for this study.

According to Adler (2002), “It is important for music educators to understand the psychological and sociological processes at work in students’ personal, educational, and musical development, in order to develop curricula and pedagogies that are compatible with these processes” (p. 297). The literature does not point to one pedagogical approach designed for teaching males to sing. By developing a better understanding of the psychological and sociological processes at work in the lives of male students in rural South-Central Manitoba, the researcher searched for pedagogical strategies and materials that would engage these students in singing.

Deficiencies in the Literature

A growing body of literature investigates attitudes towards singing in kindergarten through grade 6 students (Hale, 2006; Hall, 2005; Mizener, 1990; Phillips & Aitchison, 1998; Pineda, 2017; Svengalis, 1978; Taylor, 2009). There is, however, a lack of literature focusing on grade 3 male students' attitudes toward singing in a Canadian choral context. Becker (2016) has developed a curriculum to help engage grade 5 and 6 boys in singing, but there is a lack of teacher action research focusing specifically on ways to engage grade 3 boys in singing.

Significance of Grade 3

Svengalis (1978) found that a large decline in attitudes toward singing occurs between third and fourth grade (age eight and nine) for male students. At this age, children become self-conscious and may resist participation in singing (Phillips, 1992). This decline in positive attitudes may not be “apparent in the classrooms until fifth or sixth grade, and by that time [is] probably immune to change” (Svengalis, 1978, p. 83). This is supported by Mizener (1990), Phillips (1992), and Taylor (2009). According to Svengalis, “third grade is a crucial year in terms of demonstrating to students that music is an acceptable male option” (p. 84-85). Phillips (1992) writes:

Teachers must do everything possible to assure children that singing knows no gender bias and is something that everyone can *learn* to do. This issue must be addressed head-on in the third grade if many children are to be spared the inevitable consequences of insecurity masked by indifference. (p. 74)

Phillips and Aitchison (1998) found that many boys in fifth and sixth grade did not want to learn how to sing. They therefore advocate for early intervention strategies if singing is to be maintained by students as they grow older. Working to promote positive attitudes toward singing in grade 3 (age eight) boys could help to lessen this decline in attitudes and promote male singing into middle years and high school (Phillips, 1992).

Until the age of nine, the brain has the ability to accumulate knowledge with extraordinary ease. At the onset of puberty, this ability lessens. The focus of the brain shifts to strengthening essential knowledge and deleting knowledge that is not essential (Hermann, 2005; Hodges, 2006). Adolescents who stop participating in singing lose many of the singing skills they gained in childhood (Freer, 2007). Building confidence in singing before the age of nine is essential to ensure the continuation and maintenance of singing skills.

Gender stereotyping of instruments is a common theme in the literature surrounding gender in music education (Abeles & Porter, 1978; Conway, 2000; Green, 2002; Harrison, 2007, 2008). Some instruments are considered male and some female, with singing on the feminine end of the spectrum (Green, 1997; Harrison). This stereotyping is influenced by the media, parents, and peers. Hall (2005) found that this stereotyping began as early as kindergarten, but Collins (2009) claims that it does not become pronounced until age nine. If music teachers are successful in instilling a love of singing before the age of nine, male students may have more resilience to the pressures that surround gendered musical choices.

Overview of the Issues

A number of issues surrounding grade 3 boys and their engagement in singing are highlighted below. These issues helped to inform the research questions of the study and will be explored more comprehensively in the literature review.

How Males Learn

Research indicates that male brains develop at different rates and times than female brains (Blanton et al., 2004; Hanlon, Thatcher, & Cline, 1999; Ingalthalikar et al., 2014). Male brains tend to favour development of the right hemisphere, which is responsible for spatial skills, navigation, mathematical reasoning, logic, mechanical reasoning, and the coordination of motor

movement with visual targeting (Gur et al., 2012; Hanlon et al.; Sax, 2017). Honouring the developmental strengths of boys will help to engage them in the process of learning to sing.

Males have different learning needs than females (Gurian, Henley, & Trueman, 2001; Neu & Weinfeld, 2007; Sax, 2017). To honour their learning needs in singing situations, males need “physical movement, fast instructional pacing, substantial peer interaction, skill-based challenges and highly rhythmic repertoire” (Freer, 2012, p. 13). To engage males in singing, they need to understand the relevance of the music they are learning to their own lives (Jones, 2014; Pineda, 2017; Power, 2008; Taylor, 2009). An interest in the subject matter will also help to foster engagement (Nolin, 1973; Taylor). Humour, silliness, and fun can be another effective way to gain the interest of male students (Freer, 2012; Hall, 2005; Neu & Weinfeld).

When learning environments match the needs of young boys, “engagement, motivation and performance can be expected to improve” (Freer, 2010, p. 21). Disengagement, leading to boredom and behaviour issues (Jones, 2014), may be a result of teaching methods and materials that do not engage the creative and practical sides of a boy’s character (Power, 2008). To promote engagement and positive attitudes toward singing, it is essential for music educators to plan activities that honour the learning needs of boys (Collins, 2009; Neu & Weinfeld, 2007; Power).

Attitudes Toward Singing

Research supports that positive attitudes toward singing for males in grades 3 through 6 decrease as grade level increases (Bowles, 1998; Bowman, 1988; Broquist, 1961; Mizener, 1990; Nolin, 1973; Phillips & Aitchison, 1998; Pogonowski, 1985; Siebenaler, 2008; Svengalis, 1978; Taylor, 2009). Phillips (1992) posits that “without the proper attitude, the psychomotor process

[of singing] breaks down” (p. 24). If a student has a negative attitude toward singing, he will not be able to exhibit the physical skills needed to sing well.

Many factors may contribute to declining attitudes toward singing including parental/peer influences, societal influences, staff/school culture, and lack of male role models. Musical preferences and instrumental accompaniment may also affect male attitudes toward singing and engagement in singing activities. Negative attitudes toward singing caused by outside influences can diminish growth opportunities for boys. Adler (2002) explains:

If some boys are inclined towards, or identify with certain activities, but they perceive those activities as inappropriate for them, then their senses of self-esteem are likely to be compromised. By denying themselves the full range of activities that could be available to them, they are deprived of potential growth experiences that contribute to the construction of identity and self-esteem, and are therefore limited in their life possibilities. (p. 5)

The development and maintenance of positive attitudes toward singing will help give boys the confidence to pursue singing experiences. These positive attitudes will be needed to carry male singers through the voice change, which can be a challenging time during adolescence (Phillips, 1992). Developing positive attitudes toward singing early in life is one way to promote perseverance through life’s challenges and lead to life-long singing.

Self-Beliefs in Music

Svengalis (1978) found that the largest decline in male self-concept occurred after grade 3. Therefore, grade 3 is a crucial year for teachers to design instruction in ways that build male self-confidence in music. Teachers can do this by recognizing and encouraging any degree of student improvement. Positive encouragement will help to counteract any past negative musical experiences and lessen future declines in self-concept.

Svengalis (1978) cites self-concept in music as a major influence on music attitude. She explains that self-concept in music is the result of perceived success or failure in music experiences, which in elementary school is largely dependent upon student's success in singing. Due to the competitive nature of males, they may withdraw from situations where they feel incompetent (Sherban, 1995). If these male students feel they cannot sing, they may also withdraw from singing (Austin, Renwick, & McPherson, 2006).

Taylor (2009) surveyed students in grades 3, 4, and 5 from two different elementary schools in a Southeastern United States school district. She noted a decrease in self-concept scores as grade level increased. Further, the results of the study showed that self-concept was the best predictor of attitudes toward music. Taylor concluded that by influencing positive student self-concepts through successful music experiences, a music educator may also cultivate more positive student attitudes toward music. Working to build this self-concept surrounding singing in grade 3 is essential for improving student attitudes and increasing engagement in the following grades.

Statement of the Problem

Many grade 3 boys struggle to engage in singing activities in general elementary music classes. This negatively affects the learning of male and female students in these classes. Finding ways to engage grade 3 boys in the singing process through the development of skills, positive attitudes, and positive self-beliefs may help to further support continued male engagement in singing activities.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to explore how regular music programming in a school in rural South-Central Manitoba could be designed to foster engagement in singing in grade 3 boys.

The study explored the following questions:

1. How does involvement in the selection of music repertoire and activities impact grade 3 boys' engagement in singing?
2. How does incorporating topics of student interest into singing activities impact grade 3 boys' engagement in singing?
3. What accompaniment instruments positively influence engagement in singing for grade 3 boys?
4. How does a psychomotor approach to teaching singing influence grade 3 boys' engagement in singing?
5. How do male role models influence grade 3 boys' engagement in singing?

Boundaries of the Study

This study was constructed with the following boundaries:

1. Singing took place within regularly scheduled mixed-gender music classes.
2. To ensure the study was carried out in an ethical manner, data were generated from all students in the classes under study. Only data from grade 3 male participants were recorded as grade 3 boys were the main focus of the study.
3. The study took place at an elementary school in rural South-Central Manitoba.
4. The students were taught by a female teacher.

5. Singing was taught with and without instrumental accompaniment. Instrumental accompaniment included piano, guitar, Orff instruments, African drums, soprano ukulele, and baritone ukulele.

Definition of Terms

The following terms are defined in relation to how they were used in this study:

1. **Engagement** refers to the “attention, interest, investment, and effort students expend in the work of learning” (Marks, 2000, p. 155). Students who are engaged will demonstrate emotional involvement and motivation to actively participate in learning activities (Marks, 2000; MacMillan Dictionary, 2018; Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2018). Boys who are fully engaged in singing will focus on the task at hand, watch and follow the directions of the director/teacher, sit or stand in a way that supports the breath, actively produce sound using the body’s singing mechanism, and use their faces and eyes to express the emotions in the music (Phillips, 1992).
2. **Regular music programming** refers to regularly scheduled music classes within the course of the school day. Manitoba Education and Training mandates that students spend 10% of their instructional time receiving arts education. Arts education includes dance, drama, music, and visual arts (Manitoba Education and Training, 2017). At the featured school, students attend music class for 34 minutes every two days in a six-day cycle.
3. **South-Central Manitoba** consists of communities within the Central Region of Manitoba according to Manitoba Choral Association, extending from the Canada-United States border in the south to Sandy Bay in the north, Morris in the east and Cartwright in the west (Manitoba Choral Association, 2018).

4. **Rural** is the opposite of urban. In this study, rural refers to Manitoba communities outside of a city (Bowman, 1988).
5. **Grade 3 boys** are male students who are in their fourth year of school in the Manitoba Public School System and who typically fall between the ages of seven and nine (OneStop Canada).
6. **Instrumental accompaniment** refers to music played while students are singing (Robins, 2010). Accompaniment can be played by the students who are singing or by someone other than the singers. In grade 3 general music classes in the school under study, this usually includes Orff instruments, piano, guitar, ukulele, and recorded instrumental music.
7. **Music Attitude** is a “learned predisposition” reflecting the way one thinks, feels, and acts in relation to general music activities (Price, 1986; Shaw & Tomcala, 1976).
8. **Self-Concept in Music** is a construct based upon individuals’ self-perceptions of musical abilities and interests, and perceptions of those abilities in relation to other domains and people (Taylor, 2009).
9. **Male** refers to a child with male anatomy as specified by the child’s parent(s)/guardian(s) on school intake information. In this study the words male and boy are used interchangeably (Cambridge Dictionary, 2018).
10. **Female** refers to a child with female anatomy, as specified by the child’s parent(s)/guardian(s) on school intake information. In this study the words girl and female are used interchangeably (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2018).
11. **Masculine** refers to having characteristics that are traditionally thought to be typical of or suitable for males (Cambridge Dictionary, 2018).

- 12. Feminine** refers to having characteristics that are traditionally thought to be typical of or suitable for females (Cambridge Dictionary, 2018).
- 13. Gender** refers to male or female identification of humans. In this study the words sex and gender are used interchangeably (English Oxford Living Dictionaries, 2018).
- 14. Gender binary** is a classification system consisting of two genders, male and female (Dictionary.com, 2018).
- 15. Gender variant** refers to students who do not fit within the gender binary of male and female, including intersex, transgendered, and transsexual (DePalma, 2013). These students are also referred to as gender nonconforming (Payne & Smith, 2014).

Overview of the Completed Thesis

Chapter 1 introduces the problems, subproblems, themes, and need for the study. Chapter 2 reviews the related literature surrounding the issues in this study. Chapter 3 discusses the methodology of the study. Chapter 4 provides a summary of the research findings and Chapter 5 discusses the findings and offers recommendations for practice and further research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This literature review is divided into three main sections: How Boys Learn, Attitudes Toward Singing, and Self-Beliefs About Singing. These sections represent three significant factors in the development of male engagement in singing. The content in each of these areas informed programming of Grade 3 General Music in the present study.

How Boys Learn

A body of literature exists to support the understanding that boys learn differently than girls (Gurian, et al., 2001; Neu & Weinfeld, 2007; Sax, 2017). When it comes to learning, what boys need is different than what girls need (Sax). Many factors (for example, social, emotional, cultural) impact those needs when it comes to learning in general music and singing-based classes. Working diligently to honour the learning needs of male students will have benefits for all students. Many times, acknowledging the learning needs of boys will also enhance the learning of girls (Broquist, 1961). This section examines how boys learn and how this impacts their engagement and attitudes toward singing, in turn affecting the learning and engagement of their female counterparts.

It is important to preface this section by addressing the fact that there are variations of masculine and feminine characteristics within gender categories. Not all children of the same gender will develop and learn the same way (Sax, 2017). “Learning styles are influenced not simply by gender but by a range of factors including personal experience and out-of-school activities as well as the pupil’s own individual characteristics” (Gipps & Murphy, 1994 as cited in Skelton, 2001, p. 58). The research may not reflect the learning needs of every child and some of the research information may not apply to all students in the same gender category.

It is also important to note that “connections in the brain can be strengthened as a result of experience” (Sacks, 1993 as cited in Skelton, 2001, p. 47). There is potential for developing

both sides of the brain by exposing children to different learning experiences and learning styles. When reading the following section, it is important to remember that “biological features are but one element of the much broader picture regarding gender” (Skelton, p. 47). Some other parts of the picture, including expectations of society, community, peers and family, attitudes, and self-beliefs, are explored in the following sections of this literature review.

Gender Fluidity

At this time in history, the field of education is recognizing that gender is not always presented as a binary. Some students will not fit within the prescribed descriptors of male and female and it is the responsibility of educators to recognize these differences and be supportive of all students (DePalma, 2013). Students who do not fit into the gender binary of male and female may feel that their biological characteristics do not match their own perceptions of their gender (Rankin & Beemyn, 2012). According to Saewyc (2017), “there are more than a dozen documented genetic or phenotypic variations that do not completely fit the two simplistic categories [male and female], and together, they may comprise 1%–2% of the population worldwide” (p. 1). This confirms that the cultural construct of an absolute gender binary is not scientifically accurate (Saewyc).

Research in the area of gender fluidity in elementary education is in its beginning stages (Payne & Smith, 2014; Mackenzie & Talbott, 2018). This is also a very new research area in music education. Studies exist about transgendered students in senior years choirs (Palkki, 2016), transgendered youth in middle and senior years (Nichols, 2013), transgendered music educators (Bartolome, 2016), and teacher attitudes towards transgendered students (Silveira & Goff, 2016), but studies relating to transgendered students in elementary music education contexts are not currently available.

In Rankin and Beemyn's (2012) large-scale study on gender diversity within the context of post-secondary institutions in the United States, participants described feeling different from others because of their perceptions of their own gender at the mean age of 5.4 years. Although it is rare to have a student in an elementary school who identifies as transgendered, Payne and Smith (2014) report a specific case of a grade 4 student in the northeastern United States.

The gender binary is still prominent in the community under study, so this literature review will look at learning differences as highlighted in research that examines male and female as a binary construct. The study is looking at male and female as traditionally viewed and the literature reflects these views. Students who do not fall within the gender binary may benefit from some of the strategies supported in the literature review. I acknowledge that the information provided in this review will not apply to every child or gender, but it is my hope that it will give teachers a place to start when determining the learning needs of individual students.

Male and Female Brain Development

Physical Differences. In general, males have larger brains than females (Baron-Cohen, 2003; Blanton et al., 2004; Hanlon et al., 1999), but brain research has shown more connections between parts of the brain in females (Hanlon et al.; Ingalhalikar et al., 2014). The corpus callosum, the part of the brain that connects brain hemispheres, is larger in females than in males (Bishop & Wahlsten, 1997).

The left hemisphere is the side of the brain that controls phonological processing, language comprehension, and language production in both males and females (Hanlon et al., 1999; Neu & Weinfeld, 2007). Females process verbal language simultaneously in both hemispheres of the brain, while males process language in the left side of the brain only (Blanton et al., 2004). Females draw on both sides of the brain for language processing, so if one side is

damaged or injured, the other side can make up for this deficiency. However, if there is any damage to the left side of the brain in males, language processing is affected detrimentally (Blanton et al., 2004). This helps to explain the higher rate of learning disabilities in male populations (Baron-Cohen, 2003; Blanton et al.; Gurian et al., 2001).

Ingalhalikar et al. (2014) studied the brains of 949 healthy humans aged eight to twenty-two years (428 males and 521 females). They used a Siemens 3T Verio scanner to create high-resolution images of the brain. They also used an interregional probabilistic fiber tractography to create 3D images of the brain for further analysis. They discovered greater intra-hemispheric connectivity in male brains than in female brains, which supports a system for coordinated physical movement in males. They also discovered greater inter-hemispheric connectivity in females than in males. Female brains are better able to integrate the analytical and sequential reasoning modes of the left hemisphere with the spatial, intuitive processing of information of the right hemisphere.

Developmental Differences. Hanlon et al. (1999) studied the brains of 224 female and 284 male children between the ages of two months and sixteen and a half years. To represent the sixteen-year developmental period, sliding averages were calculated for each point in the time series using quarter-year increments. Students at each age point were included in the study. Participants represented varying socioeconomic groups. Electrodes were placed on each participant's head in sixteen scalp locations. Each participant underwent a one-minute EEG with their eyes closed. Graphs and brain maps were used to present, analyze and compare results.

Hanlon et al. (1999) found that from birth to age eight, girls demonstrate more development activity in the left hemisphere regions of the brain. Between ages eight and twelve years, female development shifts to the right hemisphere. From ages thirteen to sixteen and a

half, girls tend to return to development of the left hemisphere. This pattern allows females to demonstrate strengths in verbal fluency; discrimination of objects, colors, and faces; fine motor coordination; social cognition; and memory for sequential details. These abilities are more prevalent four to twelve years earlier in females than in males. In a study of neurocognitive activity in participants between the ages of eight and twenty-one, Gur et al. (2012) presented similar findings.

From birth to age six, boys tend to favour development activity in the right hemisphere of the brain. Between ages six and eleven, brain development in males shifts to the left hemisphere. From ages twelve to sixteen and a half, boys continue to develop the left hemisphere, but favor the right hemisphere (Hanlon et al., 1999). Testosterone in males has been shown to increase development of the right hemisphere of the brain. This hemisphere controls spatial skills and gives males the ability to figure out how things work or “systemize” (Baron-Cohen, 2003). It also allows males to demonstrate strong navigation skills and to excel at geography and building activities (Sax, 2017).

Boys develop the ability to visually track objects earlier than girls (Hanlon et al., 1999). Visually, they are drawn to speed and direction, which explains why they prefer to draw pictures that incorporate action and movement (Sax, 2017). Males demonstrate strong abilities in the areas of mathematical reasoning, abstract logic, mechanical reasoning, and skills needed in the coordination of motor movement with visual targeting. These abilities are established four to eight years earlier than in females (Hanlon et al.).

The development of the pre-frontal cortex of the brain, which controls impulsive behaviour and empathetic responses, tends to be faster in girls than in boys. Males also develop

less intuitive skills than their female counterparts (Neu & Weinfeld, 2007). Testosterone causes males to be more aggressive and competitive than females (Gurian et al., 2001).

Emotional Differences. Females demonstrate more connections between the area of the brain that controls emotion (the amygdala) and the regions of the brain that control language. This often leads to the ability in females to sense emotional states and use language to describe feelings (Neu & Weinfeld, 2007). When faced with situations that involve emotion, boys tend to process the situation using their brain stem, resulting in a *fight or flight* response. Girls demonstrate the ability to move emotional information into the cerebral cortex, allowing them to process emotions and seek help from others (Gurian et al., 2001; Neu & Weinfeld). This gives them the ability to process emotionally distressing incidents more quickly than boys.

As previously mentioned, males deal with emotions in the brain stem. If the brain stem is activated, the top of the brain that aids in learning cannot be accessed. A boy who experiences a crisis at home or at school may take hours to process his emotions, inhibiting learning for the duration of the emotional processing time. As a result of this lost learning time, a male struggling to process emotional incidents will not progress as quickly academically as his peers. Over time this can become detrimental to academic growth (Gurian et al., 2001).

Implications for Music. Some musical abilities, such as pitch perception (Edwards & Hodges, 2007), are controlled by the right side of the brain—the side responsible for *systemizing* (Baron-Cohen, 2003). However, rhythmic skills and perception are controlled by the left side of the brain. Beat perception has also been observed in the right hemisphere and across hemispheres (Edwards & Hodges). Many musical skills, including melodic and harmonic processing, utilize both hemispheres of the brain (Balaban, Anderson, & Wisniewski, 1998; Edwards & Hodges). Musical abilities are not restricted to boys or girls, although the ability of the female brain to use

both sides simultaneously may give them an advantage in the early stages of music learning. Initial music learning stages may take longer for boys.

Students who begin musical studies at an early age have shown a larger corpus callosum in the brain (Lee, Chen, & Schlaug, 2003). Neuroimaging studies have revealed “widespread bilateral brain activity during discrete music processing tasks” (Edwards & Hodges, 2007, p. 7). This demonstrates that music is a powerful tool for boys and girls to strengthen neural pathways and build connections between the sides of the brain (Gurian et al., 2001).

Creating Environments for Male Learning

“When there is a better ‘fit’ between the adolescent and the learning environment, then engagement, motivation and performance can be expected to improve” (Freer, 2010, p. 21). This is also true for younger boys. A lack of interest in a subject area may stem from teaching methods that do not engage the creative and practical sides of a boy’s character (Power, 2008). It is therefore essential for music teachers to plan activities that honour the learning needs of boys (Neu & Weinfeld, 2007; Power) to promote engagement and positive attitudes toward the subject area (Collins, 2009).

Relevance of Learning. Boys thrive in environments that relate to their life outside of school (Neu & Weinfeld, 2007; Power, 2008). If boys do not see the relevance of music to their lives or their future career plans, they will often disengage from the material and activities being taught (Austin et. al, 2006; Koza as cited by Adler, 2002). Boys often avoid singing because they perceive it to be unrelated to their future career plans (Taylor, 2009). The music teacher’s challenge is to help boys understand how music and singing contribute to the development of skills and knowledge in other learning areas, thus increasing the relevance of music learning in their lives. Boys can also be led to understand that music is a part of many aspects of public life

and that studying music can lead to a deeper appreciation and understanding of the music they already know.

Keddie (2005), a researcher based in Australia, presents a framework for best practice in boys' education that can be applied to teaching all students. This framework outlines the significance of 'connectedness'. When students connect their life experiences with new knowledge and understandings, enhanced learning will occur. Giving students the opportunity to demonstrate capabilities they have learned outside of school and that relate to their home cultures will help to enhance learning (Keddie, 2005). One way to foster this 'connectedness' in the music room could be to encourage students to share music or activities from their home cultures with their class. Awareness of the cultural backgrounds within a group of students will help music teachers to support this kind of sharing (Pineda, 2017).

Environments of Care. Forming caring bonds (also known as attachment bonds) with an adult will positively impact a student's ability to learn. This is especially important in young students as they begin their schooling. Children under emotional stress who live in fear of losing those they care about (referred to as attachment loss) experience higher levels of the stress hormone, cortisol, in the brain. Cortisol causes children to experience neural activity in the base of the brain—the area responsible for survival and *fight or flight* reactions. This makes it difficult for children to access the learning centers for literacy and math in the upper parts of the brain. Stressed children in fear of attachment loss experience weaker memory, which negatively affects learning. Children need to feel safe and cared for in order to learn successfully. Students need to know that they can trust their teachers as elders, leaders, mentors, and role models (Gurian et al., 2001).

A music teacher's first concern, even before skills are taught, should be forming caring bonds with students and developing trust (Pineda, 2017). When students trust their teacher, this will impact their willingness to take risks, which is essential when students are learning to sing in front of others. Developing safe environments and encouraging trusting relationships between students will also build a space in which students feel comfortable singing with and in front of others (Ashley, 2010).

Environments of Shame. Boys often react more intensely to shame than their female classmates (Neu & Weinfeld, 2007). If boys feel shamed by a teacher, often in the form of public criticism or embarrassment (Gurian et al., 2001), they tend to react negatively to that teacher. Negative reactions include withdrawal and displaying *class clown* qualities as a form of self-protection (Neu & Weinfeld). A *class clown* makes jokes or pulls pranks to make others laugh, often drawing attention away from the teachers' instruction (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2019; Urban Dictionary, 2011).

Shaming a student can come in three forms: direct verbal aggression, sarcasm, or the use of subtle blaming language. Boys experience criticism as shameful when they feel it is directed at them as a person rather than at their behaviour (Neu & Weinfeld). Baldock (2009) describes how boys may react in situations where they feel shamed: "Boys don't like to be confronted; it awakens their wild man and can accelerate to conflict unnecessarily. They go into survival mode, and the *fight or flight* instinct engages. Angry or reluctant boys are not engaged learners" (p. 96). Boys need positive reinforcement to engage in learning activities. Negative feedback from the teacher can cause boys to regress in their learning (Baldock).

Encouragement and praise are the best ways to facilitate positive participation from boys in music class. Music teachers who use shame as a form of classroom management should reflect on the effectiveness of this strategy. Students are more likely to try ‘risky’ activities like singing when they know they can participate without feeling shame.

Supports for Male Learning

Movement in Learning. Boys have a biological need to express themselves through kinesthetic movement (Bourne, 2009; Ingallhalikar et al., 2014; Sherban, 1995). The connection between the nervous system and brain in boys is designed for motor function response (Neu & Weinfeld, 2007). Boys get bored easily and require varying activities to stimulate their attention. Once a boy becomes bored, he will likely give up on learning and act out behaviourally (Gurian et al., 2001). Young adolescents need a change of activity focus or location every twelve to thirteen minutes (Freer, 2007). Younger boys need changes even more often.

Paley also observed behavioral differences between girls and boys. By the age of four, boys got into trouble in music class more often than girls. She attributed this difference to the girls’ ability to sit and attend as opposed to the boys’ need to be in motion and playing. Singing, requiring listening and attending would be, according to Paley’s observations, more accessible to girls than to the boys. (as cited in Sherban, 1995, p. 49-50)

Boys need physical activity and movement while learning (Bourne, 2009; Freer, 2007). Increased blood-flow to the neocortex of the brain caused by movement can help to stimulate imagination, learning, and the processing of emotions (Gurian et al., 2001). Males produce less serotonin (calming chemical) than females, causing them to be more impulsive (Bonomo, 2010). Lower serotonin levels and higher metabolism leads to fidgety behaviour when boys are unable to move around the room (Gurian et al.).

Mizener (1990) administered a questionnaire to 542 third through sixth grade students to learn about their attitudes toward singing. She discovered that “listening to teacher explanations about the notes of the songs was perceived as an unattractive part of music class” (p. 157).

Baldock (2009) agrees that teachers should keep explanations brief. Boys “don’t like listening to long instructions and need tasks broken down into steps” (Baldock, p. 101). Boys need movement and active learning (Bourne, 2009).

Songs that incorporate movement can honour boys’ need for movement when learning. Movement can be used to teach and reinforce new musical concepts. Providing activities where boys have the opportunity to move often, such as singing games or guided movement activities, will help to foster engagement (Jones, 2014). Movement can also be very helpful in the physical process of singing. As Young (2009) noted: “Movement can encourage freer, better supported vocal work. Often, movement can free up a stiffly held larynx or a tight-breath mechanism where no amount of direct instruction will” (p. 74). Movement should be interspersed throughout a lesson, especially when large periods of time are planned for learning new song material. These *movement breaks* (also referred to as *brain breaks*) can help to manage boredom, release tension, and increase the flow of blood to the brain.

Competition in Learning. Boys have a biological need to find an outlet for competition (Neu & Weinfeld, 2007). The brains of male babies in utero are bathed in testosterone, which can contribute to their competitive drive. To understand their own abilities, boys test themselves through competition to see what they can do (Neu & Weinfeld). Therefore, competitive activities work well as a vehicle for learning (Freer, 2007; Grossman & Grossman, 1994). Team musical challenges can help boys to utilize and gain musical knowledge, while incorporating an element of competition.

Play in Learning. For children and adolescents (boys and girls), play can be an effective way to promote learning. Games that encourage social collaboration and competitiveness incorporate the aspect of play (Baldock, 2009). Musical learning outcomes can also be met through games. Baldock experienced success incorporating games into the beginning of her music lessons with middle years music students. Students were much more willing to engage and participate in the latter parts of the lesson when they began the class with a game. Her students were “engaging with education because they were deriving pleasure from it” (Baldock, p. 97).

Music games can be used at the beginning of an elementary music lesson or choir rehearsal to focus students on a musical concept and bring students into a positive state of mind. They can also be used at the end of a lesson to reinforce previous learning and to reward positive participation in music class.

Hearing in Learning. The prefrontal lobes of the brain develop more quickly in females than in males. The occipital lobes are where sensory processing occurs. Females are able to take in more sensory data than males. In general, they hear better, smell better, and take in more information through the fingertips and skin (Bonomo, 2010; Gurian et al., 2001; Sax, 2017). Sax (2017) studied hearing differences between boys and girls and found that “for the average boy to hear you as well as the average girl, you have to speak about eight decibels more loudly” (p. 19). Boys are better able to pay attention if they can clearly hear what the teacher is saying. Seating boys closer to the teacher can help them to hear the teacher better, although this works best when boys are in the early primary grades (Sax). Amplification systems for teachers in large classrooms can also help boys to hear the teacher more clearly.

... May (1985) noted that, in a study of primary children, females, at an early age, showed preference for music with low dynamism while males exhibited a preference for music with high dynamism. Dynamics might be the reason that band music would be more appealing to boys where as singing would be more appealing to girls. (as cited in Sherban, 1995, p. 50)

de Boise (2015) supports this idea through research on musical preferences with adults. Women were more likely to say they disliked music because it was *noisy* or *loud*. Hall (2005) found that boys in kindergarten already had gendered perceptions of noise level. The following quote describes these perceptions:

Why do boys play the drums? *Because they are noisy.*

Do girls like noisy things? *No*

What do they like? *Sweet sounds.* (Hall, p. 12)

Repertoire selection can play a large role in appealing to boys' desire for music with high dynamism. Accompaniments that utilize layering of sounds or multiple timbres on the same instrument (i.e. complex drum rhythms) will appeal more to boys than a simple accompaniment utilizing one instrument.

Peers in Learning. Many boys are peer-oriented learners (Bourne, 2009). Gurian et al. (2001) explain that, "[b]rain development and social development in the elementary years are extremely intertwined" (p. 132). In many cases in early years, the brain is not yet able to act independently. The brain relies on a group to help with processing and reflection on learning. Partner and group work activities correlate positively with increased brain development (Gurian et al.).

Bowles (1998) surveyed 2,251 children in kindergarten through grade 5 from Texas and Minnesota about their attitudes toward activities traditionally found in the music classroom. She found that "[a]lthough kindergartners and first graders prefer to work on music assignments within a small group, most students reported a preference for working with a partner. The appeal

of working alone on music assignments was very low (18% across grades)” (p. 206). There is no information provided in Bowles’ study about the number of students in a small group, but in the experience of the researcher, a small group consists of between three to six students.

It is important to note that it takes time for boys to develop the skills to work successfully with others in a group. Mason (2009) found that boys enjoy activities in which they can create music in groups but require guidance to target the musical elements in an assignment. Boys focus on performing a task well and are not always sensitive to the emotions of others (Gurian et al., 2001). They are also less likely to ask the teacher for help than girls (Sax, 2017). Therefore, group work skills in boys need to be supported and developed (Gurian et al.). The music teacher can circulate the room and assist groups that require help getting started on their group activity. The music teacher can also check with groups to see if they need help throughout the group work process.

To encourage engagement in singing, Adler (2002) recommends allowing boys to sing designated male parts alongside their peers. This will help boys to recognize the unique timbral qualities of male voices (Phillips, 2003) and provide peer social support (Adler). For more information on single-sex singing opportunities, see page 31 and 32 of this thesis.

Humour in Learning. The use of humour has been shown to engage boys in learning activities. In Hall’s (2005) study, she invited two older male students (peer models) to sing with her kindergarten students. “Both models instinctively appealed to the boys’ sense of humour – one sang ‘Brown Bread’, the other sang a pirate song in character” (Hall, p. 14). “Eat Brown Bread” is a children’s song from England (C. Hall, personal communication, May 8, 2018) in which a sausage falls on the floor and gets hit by another sausage on the head (Nursery Rhymes, 2014). With its nonsense lyrics, this song would appeal to young boys’ sense of humour and

desire to be silly. Music teachers can appeal to boys' silly sides by singing songs that incorporate humour or unexpected lyrics. Boys also enjoy action stories, so songs that tell silly, unexpected, or action-related tales may appeal to boys' interests through singing (Neu & Weinfeld, 2007).

Student Preferences and Interests in Learning. Mizener (1990) suggested that “[m]usic teachers may be able to improve attitudes toward singing and toward music by including in their lesson plans, on a regular basis, activities preferred by children who do not like to sing” (p. 162). Preferences are activities that appeal to individual students (English Oxford Living Dictionaries, 2018). Music teachers should get to know what activities students enjoy so these activities can be incorporated into the teaching of singing (Bowles, 1998; Bowman, 1988). These activities, focused on enhancing musical learning, can be used to provide a short break during singing activities or a positive reward following a singing activity.

Taylor (2009) surveyed students in grades 3, 4 and 5 about their preferred activities in music class. She found that one of their most preferred activities in music was watching movies about music. In a very active music classroom, videos may be a welcome change or an essential rest period after a period of engaged learning or exertion. Preparation for concerts can be mentally, emotionally, and physically tasking for students. Perhaps videos could be used to facilitate learning in the days following a demanding concert. Taylor suggests that music teachers consider using videos and other forms of technology to teach what students consider less desirable objectives. Taylor found that listening to and discussing a famous composer's music was one of the students' least desired activities. Perhaps videos could be used to introduce the life and music of composers. Theory concepts and instrument families could also be introduced through the use of videos or interactive technology.

When students are provided with opportunities to integrate their interests in the music classroom, they become more engaged and self-motivated, and their attitudes toward music are likely to improve (Taylor, 2009). This finding is supported by Nolin (1973). Interests are defined as experiences or topics that excite curiosity, concern, or enthusiasm in students. Interests are also defined as things about which a person would like to know more (English Oxford Living Dictionaries, 2018). To engage students' interests, music teachers can select repertoire and teaching activities that reflect the interests in the class. They can use their students' interests as an *anchor for learning* (Vercelletto, 2016). This will encourage students to engage more fully with the music and make connections with what they already know about their topics of interest.

Incorporating student interests into singing activities can lead to greater enjoyment and engagement in singing activities that, in turn, may lead to more value being placed on singing. Students who place value on singing are more likely to engage in singing after elementary school than students who do not place value on singing (Austin et al., 2006; Pineda, 2017).

Creativity in Learning. Boys demonstrate a preference for practical tasks such as composing music (Mason, 2009). Boys love to create and build, which utilizes their spatial intelligence. Composition in music is a great opportunity for boys to explore sounds, sound combinations, and to build their own musical songs.

Technology, such as iPad composition programs like GarageBand and DrumStudio, can provide valuable tools for composition (Maffezzoli, 2018). Providing adequate modelling, step-by-step instructions, and interim due dates can help boys to develop their planning skills when it comes to composition using technology (Mason, 2009). Mason also recommends that boys develop a toolbox of rhythmic and melodic motifs prior to using technology for composition. Boys could be encouraged to use technology to create songs for the music class or choir to sing.

Allowing boys to be creative using movement can also help to engage them in the music learning process. Creating movement routines or choreography are good ways for boys to be creative and meet their physical need for movement. Boys can be encouraged to create rhythmic chants, songs with dance movements, sound sculptures, and musical games (Power, 2008). In general, boys take more risks than girls (Sax, 2017) and these activities would allow boys to take risks in an environment where their teacher and peers help them to feel safe (Power).

Technology in Learning. Interactive technology appeals to boys' spatial awareness and provides visual tracking opportunities (Gurian et al., 2001). Interactive SmartBoards and WhiteBoards that boys can manipulate and touch will appeal to their need for movement in learning. When listening to music for analysis, music videos can be a valuable learning tool. As noted by Mason (2009), "Boys, in particular, are significantly more focused when the learning involves both aural and visual analysis" (p. 118).

Learning about Physiology. Phillips (1992) wrote, "When one sings, one shares the inner self. That in itself can be intimidating, especially if one lacks confidence in the delivery system" (p. 18). Teaching students about their vocal physiology and how to use the voice in a technically efficient way can help to build student confidence and a sense of responsibility for their own vocal accomplishments (Allan, 2012; Welch, 1997).

Phillips and Aitchison (1998) studied the effects of psychomotor skills instruction on attitude toward singing and general music in 302 grades 4 through 6 students in a rural Iowa school district. Half of the students (treatment group) received fifteen minutes of psychomotor instruction in singing per week. These sessions included training on posture and respiration, speaking voice development, resonant tone production, diction, and expression. The other half (control group) received regular singing instruction from their music teacher. In this study, the

addition of psychomotor instruction to regular music programming helped to develop more positive attitudes toward music class in the members of the treatment group. The researchers concluded that teaching singing through songs in music class (as with the control group) may not be as effective in developing positive attitudes in learners as teaching students how to use their bodies in the singing process. Turton and Durrant (2002) interviewed adults in Great Britain between the ages of 20 and 40 about the musical experiences in their school years. Their findings support the desire from adults to have received vocal training rather than just having a sing-along.

Education about the physical anatomy of the human voice is important in a young singer's understanding of his instrument (Phillips, 2003; Welch, 1997). Developing an understanding of the whole body as the vocal instrument is essential to developing effective and healthy vocal technique (Allan, 2012). A model of the human larynx can demonstrate this part of the body so boys know what part of the body is used in singing (Phillips). A better understanding of their own vocal anatomy, physiology, vocal production, and vocal health may help boys to develop a new ownership of their singing voices (Welch). A. Dagenais (personal communication, July 10, 2018) has found that students of all school grades enjoy learning about vocal production with skeleton and body models, as well as comparing vocal sounds to those produced by other instruments.

Freer (2016) interviewed 12 boys between the ages of 12 and 18 at the London Oratory School about the male voice change, singing, and choral pedagogy. All of the participants indicated a desire to better understand the physiology and anatomy of the male voice. One participant, Roderick, said,

I think it would help if singers got to know which muscles they use when they use their vocal instrument to sing. I think that would help a lot, because you would understand what you were doing when you did it. (Freer, 2016, p. 84)

Allan (2012), Phillips (2003), and Mizener (1990) advocate for teaching students how the singing voice will grow, change, and lower as they mature. Multiple researchers (Becker, 2016; Phillips; Pineda, 2017) recommend teaching boys about the voice change between grades 4 and 6. Assuring boys that continued singing in the treble voice will help to develop a stronger changed voice with access to a larger range may help to motivate young male singers (Phillips). Examples from popular culture of males singing in their head voice, like Justin Timberlake or Adam Levine, can be used to demonstrate upper vocal ranges in men.

Pineda (2017) studied the influence of gender, choral membership, and ethnicity on grade 4 and 5 students' attitudes toward singing and choral participation. He suggested that if elementary music educators teach male students about the voice change, students can embrace it as a natural part of development when the time comes. If students are prepared for the change through the use of specific vocal instruction (Freer, 2016), anxiety will be reduced and boys may be more likely to sing through the experience. The voice change sometimes occurs before grade 4 and 5 in boys of African descent, so teaching these male students about the voice change early would be appropriate (Fisher, 2008).

Boys who do not want to “sound like a girl” can be reassured that boys and girls have different timbral qualities to their voices (Phillips, 2003). Giving boys and girls opportunities to sing separately can highlight these different tonal qualities (Pineda, 2017). Bazzzy (2010) suggested that teachers provide boys and girls with single-sex singing opportunities (e.g., in partner songs or rounds, boys sing one part while girls sing the other). This would also create a healthy source of competition in rehearsal and performance, which would in turn motivate young

male singers. Another recommendation would be to write a lower-pitched harmony line for boys only. This would give boys a sense of responsibility, camaraderie, and independence in the choir.

Section Summary

Male brains develop at different rates and times than female brains (Blanton et al., 2004; Hanlon et al., 1999; Ingalthalika et al., 2014). Male brains tend to favour development of the right hemisphere, which is responsible for spatial skills, navigation, mathematical reasoning, logic, mechanical reasoning, and the coordination of motor movement with visual targeting (Gur et al., 2012; Hanlon et al.; Sax, 2017). Acknowledging and fostering male strengths in brain development can help to foster male engagement in singing.

Males have different learning needs than females (Gurian et al., 2001; Neu & Weinfeld, 2007; Sax, 2017). Males need body movement incorporated into their learning to engage their attention, stimulate imagination, and help them process their emotions (Bourne, 2009; Gurian et al.; Ingalthalika et al., 2014; Neu & Weinfeld; Sherban, 1995). Movement in learning visuals (like videos) will help to meet male visual tracking needs (Gurian et al.). Boys thrive when they have the opportunity to be creative and utilize technology (Mason, 2009). To engage males in music learning, males need to understand the relevance of the music they are learning to their lives outside of school (Jones, 2014; Pineda, 2017; Power, 2008; Taylor, 2009). Personal interest in the subject matter will help to foster engagement (Nolin, 1973; Taylor). Humour, silliness and fun can be another effective way to gain male student interest (Freer, 2012, Hall, 2005; Neu & Weinfeld).

Males need caring environments in which they receive ample teacher support and their efforts are encouraged (Gurian et al., 2001; Pineda, 2017; Svengalis, 1978). Teachers can further support their male students by ensuring they can clearly hear the teacher's voice (Sax, 2017). Support provided by male and female peers can be very effective in the progression of male

learning (Adler, 2002; Ashley, 2010). Teaching about the physiology of the voice will also help males to take ownership and place value on their singing (Phillips, 2003).

Attitudes Toward Singing

Attitudes have a large effect on male engagement and success in singing (Broquist, 1961; Svengalis, 1978). “The degree to which any one individual becomes involved in music throughout life is perhaps more closely related to his or her attitude toward music than to any other single factor” (Svengalis, p. 74). Svengalis studied grade 3 through 6 students’ attitudes toward music within three schools in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. These students were from a middle-class population. She developed four survey instruments: Masculine and Feminine Connotations of Music (MAFCOM), Self-Concept in Music (SCIM), Music Background (MB), and Music Attitude Scale (MAS). Svengalis witnessed the largest drop in music attitude scores between third and fourth grades in one school. She stressed that grade 3 is a crucial year to show boys that music is an acceptable activity for males. She also stressed the importance of grade 3 in developing positive attitudes toward music in boys.

Nolin (1973) wrote that elementary school music teachers should consider the attitudes of students toward their school music experiences. Prerequisites for successful teaching and learning experiences are positive student attitudes toward music class. Elementary school music teachers must first work to promote positive attitudes toward music class before successful learning experiences can take place. It is important to understand that attitudes about singing are often caused by external forces or non-music variables (Svengalis, 1978). Pogonowski’s (1980) study indicated that music attitudes are a direct result of grade, gender, and socioeconomic status. This section explores what the literature says about these and other influences on student attitudes toward singing.

Beliefs about Gender

Gender Schema. A students' gender schema or perception of gender roles, as influenced by their upbringing, will affect their memory and learning. Males and females better learn and retain information that is relevant to their understanding of their gender role. This indicates that students may have difficulty processing and accepting information that is not in line with their understandings and perceptions of gender roles (Grossman & Grossman, 1994). Boys are more prone than girls to construct and use gender categories (Adler, 2002). Many times, "boys who have been raised in a milieu of male sports role models may have difficulty seeing the subject of music as part of an acceptable masculine identity" (McGregor & Mills, 2006, p. 223). In these instances, musical stereotypes and attitudes presented by parents may be difficult to overcome in the music room (Roulston & Misawa, 2011).

Parents. Roulston and Misawa (2011) interviewed six elementary school music teachers in the United States. Five teachers were female and one teacher was male. The male teacher, Brian, explained that fathers often fear their sons' involvement in singing because they see singing as a symbol of homosexuality. Many fathers of his male students were not supportive of their sons' involvement in chorus until they saw how successful their sons could be. He describes that many fathers see singing as conflicting with sports. Svengalis (1978) wrote that the father plays a much more critical role in the development of sex-role preferences than does the mother. This would suggest that fathers may have a greater influence on attitudes of elementary male music students than mothers.

Sherban (1995) studied grade 1 and grade 5 boys in the music classroom and interviewed the principal of the school where she conducted this research. The principal said, "if the parents have very high expectations for their children in music, then those children would probably go

into it and not be swayed by what their peers think” (Sherban, p. 108). Therefore, parents have a strong influence on a child’s decision to become involved and remain in music and singing activities (Collins, 2009).

Male Identity. The relationships between context, family, culture, class, ability, and perceived gender all have an impact on how males construct their identity. Many people choose to establish identities that allow them the greatest amount of security within social contexts (Adler & Harrison, 2004). Those who do not fit within the social norms for their assigned gender are often treated negatively for *gender transgressions*. Females are often encouraged to cross gender lines, but this is not the case for males (Adler & Harrison). Strong gender binaries in schools and communities create a division between accepted male and female activities.

To establish a masculine identity, many boys will separate themselves from the things they perceive as feminine (Sax, 2017; Sherban, 1995; Skelton, 2001). Singing does not construct or defend masculinity (Adler, 2001 as cited in Adler & Harrison, 2004), so it is often perceived as feminine. It has also been associated with femininity because of its connection with the production of high pitches (Hall, 2005), the expression of emotions (de Boise, 2015; Broquist, 1961; Green, 1997; Harrison, 2008), the personalization of the instrument, and the association of singing with child rearing (Green, 1997). To some boys, singing may present itself as a gender transgression or a risk. Presenting boys with different options for what it looks like to be ‘male’ may encourage boys to engage in activities outside of the gender binary (Sax, 2017). Singing role models, as described below, can be instrumental in helping boys to see that singing is an acceptable male activity.

Role Models

Family Role Models. Teachers in Roulston and Misawa's (2011) study talked about the importance of parents as role models for their children's musical development. Four teachers expressed the view that fathers could be powerful role models for both male and female students. Mothers were described as maintaining supportive roles like organizing transportation, ensuring children had necessary items, and attending concerts.

Fathers and grandfathers in the music classroom can be influential role models for boys and girls (Roulston & Misawa, 2011). This is especially true for children who have been brought up without a father figure (Gurian et al., 2001). Music teachers can work to encourage and reach out to father and grandfather volunteers, bringing them into the music classroom and allowing children to have a positive male influence from the broader community (Gurian et al.). Music teachers should choose volunteers who they know will positively reinforce what is being learned in music class (Skelton, 2001).

And I think when you have fathers or grandfathers that participated in music as a child, or still do, whether it's a church choir, or a community orchestra or whatever, I think that sets terrific examples for their sons. For their daughters also. (Fiona, music teacher, as cited in Roulston & Misawa, p. 11).

The involvement of adult male role models in singing activities can assist in breaking down stereotypes and counteract the stigma associated with boys' singing (Power, 2008; Roulston & Misawa).

Teacher Role Models. Teacher gender may have an impact on young boys' decisions to engage in singing (Mizener, 1990). Svengalis (1978) and Mizener found that children's attitudes towards some activities, particularly singing activities that are highly gendered, are established by age eight. Many times, boys establish their gender by separating from that which is female (Sax, 2017; Sherban, 1995). Sherban concluded that if the female teacher sings, then boys may

choose not to sing because they see singing as a female activity. Welch et al. (1997) speculated that the decline in boys' abilities to accurately sing songs may be due to them negatively identifying the act of singing songs with the sex of their music teachers (primarily females), therefore perceiving singing as a feminine act.

The fact that there are fewer male teachers in primary schools "limits the forms of masculinity available to young boys to engage with" (Skelton, 2001, p. 138). Butler, Lind & McKoy (2007) confirm that the teaching force in North America is predominantly female. Skelton refers to this issue as the "feminized primary school" and refers to it as a prime factor in male underachievement (p. 35). Neu and Weinfeld (2007) explain that boys are better able to describe what they do not want to be like (i.e. a girl) than what they want to be like. This reinforces the need for boys to have access to positive male teacher role models to emulate in the music room.

The relationships students have with their music teachers will positively or negatively influence their attitude towards music class. As mentioned previously, when teachers shame male students, these students often acquire a negative attitude towards music class (Neu & Weinfeld, 2007). Teachers who show that they care about their students and work to form attachment bonds will help to foster positive attitudes toward music class in their students (Gurian et al., 2001). If students have opportunities to form caring bonds with music teachers, this can lead to students having more respect for their teachers and may result in greater commitment to learning in music classrooms (Sherban, 1995).

Nolin (1973) studied the attitudes of grade 3 through 6 students toward musical activities. He discovered that attitude variations toward square dancing were likely due to the teachers' attitudes toward square dancing. The conclusion can be drawn that a teacher's positive attitude

toward the musical experience being taught can have a great influence on the positive attitudes of students. Bennetts (2013) found that teachers who demonstrate an obvious passion and interest in their work will encourage the same in their students. Ashley (2006, 2010) suggests that a significant factor in encouraging boys to sing may be the degree of competence, charisma, and commitment of the singing teacher.

Possible Selves. In order for boys to try activities that may be outside of their gender schema, like singing or playing certain *feminized* instruments (Green, 2002), they need to be able to see their possible self doing those activities in the future. The construct of possible selves, explored by Freer (2010), helps boys to identify and work toward attainable goals. Strong male role models, like music teachers, musical adults, or professional musicians, can help young males maintain their possible selves through positive and difficult situations (Markus & Ruvolo as cited in Hallam, 2002).

It is important for boys to see males making music in schools and in the community (Freer). Svengalis (1978) supports the importance of male role models in schools:

It is possible...that the attitudes regarding masculinity and music are formed in the very early years [of life], yet music educators may be able to increase the acceptability of music [involvement] by males by supplying increased emphasis on male participation and male role models in all areas of music in the early years of school. (p. 85)

Along with incorporating male role models in the classroom, Pineda (2017) suggests that music teachers make students aware of how males play important roles as singers in many music genres, such as pop, rock and roll, heavy metal, and jazz. Music teachers should also enhance students' awareness of the importance males have held as singers in different cultures around the world, such as Iceland, South Africa, Pacific Islands, Fiji, England, and some indigenous cultures of Australia and Canada (Hall, 2005).

Peer Role Models. Young boys search for evidence that they can become like others in their social network and relate their possible selves to *people like me* (Freer, 2010). Peer role models are an effective way to show elementary school males that singing is an appropriate male option. Giving singing boys “public visibility and recognition (e.g., as soloists in chorus, leading roles in musicals and singing activities, etc.) may provide opportunities for excellent peer modeling experiences” (Pineda, 2017, p. 169). Male peer role models have the ability to influence other boys to start singing, which in turn can revitalize singing programs (Pineda). Bandura (1997) posited that peer models are more likely to influence students' self-efficacy beliefs than adult models.

Hall (2005) arranged for older peer role models to sing with her male kindergarten students. The role models invited the boys to sing along with them. “This invitational appeal to their interests and abilities, combined with the boys’ desire to please the model, was highly motivational” (Hall, p. 14). When one peer model first sang Peace on Earth with a choral sound, the kindergarten boys laughed. This song, however, became one of the most requested songs in the following sessions with the peer model. The peer modelling sessions showed that exposing boys to a range of experiences can broaden their interests (Hall).

Peer modelling not only increased levels of singing participation in Hall’s (2005) kindergarten students, but it contributed to the boys’ learning in many ways. The boys learned about becoming older and being friends with their peer models, as well as the joy and usefulness of singing and how to sing well. Hall found that her kindergarten students’ singing abilities improved after their sessions with these peer mentors. Although the improvement may have been influenced by maturation, it can be assumed that the motivation of singing for a peer model aided in the improvement of the kindergarten students’ singing abilities (Hall).

Many studies have revealed that boys often have less positive attitudes towards singing than girls (Bowles, 1998; Bowman, 1988; Broquist, 1961; Mizener, 1990; Nolin, 1973; Phillips & Aitchison, 1998; Pineda, 2017; Pogonowski, 1985; Siebenaler, 2008; Svengalis, 1978; Taylor, 2009). To combat this, Pineda suggests the following:

When they see other males (peers or older) singing, they may start to internalize the idea that singing is a behavior suitable for both girls and boys, thereby weakening the pressures of hegemonic masculinity; consequently, boys may feel more comfortable participating in singing activities. (p. 170)

Community Influences

In some communities, boys consider singing to be outside the realm of masculine activities. This is often a reflection of cultural norms, reinforced by media, families, schools, and peers (Crawford, 1972). In these communities, certain characteristics and activities are considered *masculine* and are rewarded in males and sometimes in females. Certain other characteristics and activities are considered *feminine*. They are rewarded in females and punished in males. Children learn that displaying gender non-congruent traits or participating in activities that do not fit their gender role may result in being labelled as “different” or “homosexual” (Unks as cited in Adler, 2002). In many communities, singing is thought to be incongruent with masculinity.

Boys are more likely to be discouraged from engaging in feminine behaviours than girls from engaging in masculine behaviours (Harrison, 2008). “There is a well documented history of males generally being viewed more negatively than females for gender role transgressions” (Harrison, p. 26).

Staff/School Culture. Skelton (2001) studied the influence of community on two primary schools of different socioeconomic backgrounds in England. She looked at the theme of boys’ underachievement in the literature and sought to understand how communities impacted

male learning. She found that “the school itself constructs and maintains dominant images of masculinity which boys and girls have to negotiate with” (Skelton, p. 168-169). Boys and girls in the study often chose activities and behaviours that aligned with these dominant images.

If a school staff values and promotes singing, boys will be more likely to participate in this activity (Bennetts, 2013). Creating environments in which everyone sings and everyone is a singer can help to build positive self-concepts in singing. “Community singing, for example, engages everyone in singing (e.g., students, classroom teachers, etc.), as it emphasizes process instead of product, vernacular repertoire instead of classical, and singing for fun and recreation instead of ability” (Pineda, 2017, p. 175). If group singing in assemblies is something that a school takes part in, boys are more likely to accept that singing is an acceptable male activity (Young, 2012). When boys see singing in the school as a common and celebrated activity for males (staff and students), they will be more likely to become involved in singing programs (Hallam, 2002; Isaacs et al., 2011). On the contrary, school environments that downplay or discourage singing can make it very difficult for boys to persist in singing activities. Harrison (2008) interviewed male musicians from Australia who shared that some of their biggest obstacles to participation in the arts were unsupportive teachers and other staff.

Adler (2002) worked diligently in a Toronto middle school to promote an environment where singing was celebrated and encouraged as much as sports were celebrated. At first there was an absence of positive feedback from peers and teachers. Male singers became bitter towards teachers and administrators for not recognizing their success in singing, while publicly rewarding students’ success in sports. “Once the place of singing was elevated at Valleyfield, the boys found that they experienced homophobic harassment less frequently, and with less intensity” (Adler, p. 296).

Beliefs about music can be an obstacle to male singing. As stated by Collins (2009), “Music is perceived by some parents, peers and non-music educators as ‘not a real job’ and ‘not something real men do’. This belief needs to be constantly monitored and overtly challenged. Success and high-quality performances may be the best antidote” (p. 37). When choral programs are successful, this will encourage more male participation. Boys react well to activities that will bolster their self-esteem. Struggling programs have a lower possibility of doing this (Nolin & Vander Ark, 1977). Dunaway (1987) found that successful programs were more likely to have a higher percentage of boys participating.

Programs that include mandatory singing will gain more success in getting boys to sing. Boys do not know if they like an activity if they do not have the opportunity to try it. When boys have the opportunity to choose whether or not they will be a part of a choir, they will likely choose the most comfortable option, which often is not participating (Bennetts, 2013).

Harrison (2008) encourages schools to provide opportunities for boys to take part in music and sports through the use of flexible scheduling. When sports and choir are scheduled at the same time, boys will often choose to attend their sports commitment. Scheduling sports and choir at different times will help choir programs to gain and retain male singers.

Value Conflicts. At times, the dominant cultural values in a students’ family and community may collide with the values of music education. Bourne (2009) explains the value conflict between athletics and music by describing her student David. In David’s family, athletics were held in the highest esteem. When it came to singing, he reacted by referring to singing as “sissy stuff”. Bourne worked hard not to get frustrated with his attitude and remember that his attitude was influenced by outside forces beyond her control.

Bourne (2009) makes a number of suggestions for working with boys whose values do not line up with the values held by the music teacher. Firstly, Bourne suggests attending a game or event where a resistant athlete would recognize the teacher's support for their athletic skills, therefore changing their image of the teacher as enemy to an image of a supporter. This idea is supported by Casselman (2018). Supporting students in sports can be an effective way to influence positive participation in the music room. One teacher in Roulston and Misawa's (2011) study found that supporting local sports teams was a useful strategy for recruiting singers into choral programs.

Secondly, Bourne (2009) suggests drawing on the physical components of singing to engage resistant athletes. Teachers can emphasize the need to demonstrate good breath support and posture. She suggests using phrases that are a part of an athlete's vocabulary like, "Use your muscles" and "Be strong". Thirdly, Bourne stresses that, when possible, resistant athletes should be placed beside enthusiastic male singers who are also athletic. Teachers should always hold resistant athletes accountable for doing their best work when singing.

Peers. How boys negotiate *being a student* and *being a boy* in relation to peer relationships has an effect on learning and engagement (Skelton, 2001). When boys learn in shared spaces, it is important to acknowledge the concept of *pecking order* (Gurian et al., 2001) or *masculine hierarchy* (Skelton). *Pecking order* describes where a student fits in a group's social rankings. It is established by physical size, verbal skills, abilities, personality, and other social factors. Boys are often fragile learners when they are low in the pecking order. Cortisol, a stress hormone which causes the brain to focus on survival rather than learning, is often higher in males when they feel devalued or worthless (Gurian et al.).

Often boys work hard to gain approval from their peer group by exhibiting peer-accepted behaviours rather than demonstrating the behaviours expected by their parents and teachers (Bourne, 2009; Freer, 2007; Skelton, 2001). They would rather be a part of *naughty* group behaviours than be rejected and bullied by their peers for following the rules and expectations of the school and music classroom (Skelton). In order to be accepted in a peer group, boys must become aware of the power structures within the group. In order to fit in, they need to conform to the group's set of expectations, often characterized by avoiding showing emotion or signs of weakness (Skelton). Singing is associated with showing emotion and is sometimes rejected by boys and men on that premise (de Boise, 2015; Broquist, 1961; Green, 1997; Harrison, 2008).

In relation to involvement in extracurricular choral programs, Mizener (1990) found that more boys than girls tend to be affected by their friends' opinions. In Adler's (2002) study on the perceptions of singing in middle years boys, he found that "[t]he singing boys considered public recognition from peers - and female peers in particular - as being influential towards their persistence in singing" (Adler, p. 295). The music teacher's challenge is to encourage groups of boys to become a part of choral programs so that they can support and encourage one another. Encouraging female students to support their male peers' efforts in singing will also help to promote continued male participation in singing activities (Ashley, 2010).

Socio-Economic Status (SES), Ethnicity and Culture. Adler (2002) found that "[e]thnicity and socio-economic background influence goals and expectations for the masculine gender role, and therefore influence the compatibility of singing and other activities within that role" (p. 58). When singing and instrument playing are accepted within the masculine gender role of one's ethnicity and socio-economic background, males will be more likely to pursue these activities.

Bennetts (2013) carried out case studies in five Melbourne schools, in which she compared one school where boys achieved a breadth of male musical involvement and challenged gender stereotypes with four others. She found that students with more access to private music training (typically from higher SES backgrounds) were encouraged to pursue music, while those who did not have this access felt that they were at a disadvantage or incapable of pursuing such interests. Bennetts also found that schools where students came from high SES backgrounds were likely to have more resources allocated to music programs and a higher capacity to teach a range of musical offerings than schools where students came from low SES backgrounds. More offerings and opportunities may result in a higher percentage of positive attitudes toward singing and greater participation in musical activities.

Taylor (2009) surveyed students in grades 3, 4, and 5 from two different elementary schools in a Southeastern United States school district to understand their attitudes toward music. She found that students of low SES backgrounds displayed more positive attitudes toward music class than students of high SES backgrounds. These findings are consistent with Bowman (1988) and Shaw and Tomcala (1976). For students with low SES backgrounds, the music classroom can present opportunities to participate in musical activities and experiences that may not otherwise be available to them. Students from high SES demographics may already have extensive musical resources available to them, therefore diminishing their attitude toward the subject in school. Taylor suggests creating a link between outside music experiences and the general music classroom to help improve attitudes toward music for students from high SES backgrounds.

Vander Ark, Nolin, and Newman (1980) studied the effect of SES on attitudes of grade 3 through 6 students toward musical activities. SES was determined by the occupation of the

students' parents. Low SES parents had one of the following occupations: janitor, restaurant waiter, miner, filling station attendant, out of work, clerk, or truck driver. Middle SES parents had one of the following occupations: machine operator, plumber, salesman, mailman, carpenter, policeman, bookkeeper. High SES parents were economists, engineers, musicians, professors, teachers, bankers, architects, lawyers, chemists, scientists, and physicians. They discovered that students from middle SES backgrounds had significantly more positive attitudes toward musical activities than students from low or high SES backgrounds. These findings are echoed in Pogonowski's (1985) study of attitudes of grade 4 through 6 students in a Process-Oriented Music Curriculum (Manhattanville Music Curriculum Program). The findings of these studies give readers a general understanding of how attitudes toward music can be influenced by SES, but it is important to consider that results are always specific to a certain context.

“Within any particular culture, different types of music may be differentially valued, different groups within society may value different types of music and the value placed on music may change over time” (Hallam, 2002, p. 233). Bennetts (2013) found that students with certain ethnic backgrounds (specifically Asian) received positive support from their families and community in their pursuit of learning Western Classical Music. Similarly, one of the teachers in Roulston and Misawa's (2011) study found that parents from different ethnic and racial groups demonstrated different responses to children's participation in music and sports. For Hispanic communities, music was acceptable, although sometimes sports took precedence. For African-American families, participation in sports was a priority.

Studying grade 7 and 8 boys' perceptions of singing, Adler (2002) found that,

Singing participants who did not identify strongly with a specific culture still described family situations in which their music participation is a way for them to relate to, or earn the respect of their family members. Most participants cited their mothers as the primary supporters of their participation in the arts. (p. 294)

The musical environment of a student's home and community plays an important role in shaping a child's interests in and attitudes towards music-making (Siebenaler, 2008). It can also have a significant impact on skill development (Brand, 1986; Taylor, 2009). As noted in Svengalis (1978), "[a] boy being raised in an environment which is practically devoid of music activity probably would not view music as a viable option for himself at school or elsewhere" (p. 10).

Musical Preferences

Both Mizener (1990) and Sherban (1995) found that folk songs, or songs composed specifically for pedagogical purposes, may negatively influence children's attitudes toward singing. This *classroom music* or *school music* may carry specific feminine connotations and is different from the current popular style of music that many children seem to prefer (Broquist, 1961; Mizener). Boys tend to engage best with music that is familiar to them, like music from popular culture or the music they listen to in the home and on the radio (Pineda, 2017). One of the teachers in Roulson and Misawa's (2011) study decided that she would have to use activities other than singing folk songs to engage her male students. Getting to know what songs boys favour can help the music teacher to program songs that boys will enjoy and help to develop feelings of enjoyment associated with singing (Neu & Weinfeld, 2007; Pineda). Giving boys some ownership in the music selection process can also help to increase their engagement with the material (Renwick & McPherson, 2002).

Mizener (1990) claimed that the first step in making singing in a choir more popular is determining what makes children enjoy singing in the classroom and subsequently want to belong to a choir. Taylor (2009) recommended building upon students' musical preferences. In doing this, the music teacher can provide connections between the home and the school while at the same time addressing the goals and outcomes of the music curriculum.

Over half of Mizener's (1990) respondents reported that they liked singing with the radio. This was also true in Pineda's (2017) study. Therefore, both researchers recommend that high-quality popular songs or songs similar to those played on the radio might be learned and performed in classroom as well as in choral settings. Taylor (2009) suggests that to combat negative attitudes toward singing, music educators can use popular songs to teach students curricular outcomes that students may be less motivated to learn.

In his interviews with male singers, Harrison (2008) found that "soft, slow and classical music was reported...as being associated with femininity...[while u]p-tempo music, with a strong rhythmic pulse was perceived to be more masculine" (p. 129). This may explain the appeal of popular music to male and female students.

Musical Accompaniment

Several studies indicate that students prefer activities involving singing with musical accompaniment rather than singing without accompaniment (Broquist, 1961; Hale, 2006; Mizener, 1990; Nolin, 1973). Taylor (2009) found that students reported favorable attitudes toward choosing their own instruments and playing musical instruments. Bowles (1998) and Nolin also found that playing instruments was highly favoured among elementary age children. Mizener found,

... that students tend to prefer singing with records or tapes as accompaniment, [and] enjoy playing drums while they sing... Incorporating these activities into daily music lesson plans may serve to enhance students' enjoyment of music and of singing, and thus, improve their attitude toward singing. (p. 161)

Hale (2006) studied the attitudes of grade 1 and 2 students toward singing by distributing an attitude survey. She found that boys and girls reported more positive responses to singing with a guitar than singing with Orff instruments. Students may have related more to the guitar because it is a familiar sound from popular music. Also, many children find it challenging to sing while playing musical patterns on Orff instruments. It is likely that the music teacher was accompanying their singing with a guitar, making singing an enjoyable and less frustrating experience than singing while playing an Orff instrument. "Finding what types of songs, accompaniments and singing activities that appeal to children, particularly boys, could encourage higher rates of participation" (Hale, p. 115).

Robins (2010) investigated how intonation of an accompanying instrument affected children from kindergarten through grade 4 at a private school in the Midwestern United States. Fifty-eight general music students were selected to sing a song with the researcher as the researcher accompanied them with a guitar. Three groups were created: in-tune guitar (control group), flat intonation guitar, and sharp intonation guitar. Robins found that singing participation was greatest in the control group with the in-tune guitar. These results encourage music teachers to ensure correct intonation of accompanying instruments to promote maximum engagement in singing activities.

Section Summary

This section has discussed how student attitudes can influence engagement in singing. Many factors contribute to the formation of attitudes, including: beliefs about gender roles, parents, role models, communities (including school communities), peers, socio-economic status, ethnicity, and culture. Musical accompaniment and musical preferences can also have an effect on attitudes.

There are many ways that music teachers can help their male students develop positive attitudes toward singing. They can work to build cultures of community singing by promoting whole-school singing activities at assemblies (Pineda, 2017; Young, 2012). Music teachers can create opportunities for young boys to see older boys singing (Freer, 2007; Pineda). Bringing in male role models, including fathers and grandfathers, can show male students that other males are active in singing (Roulston & Misawa, 2011; Svengalis, 1978). Teaching students how male singing is important in many genres and cultures around the world can help to make singing relevant to young boys (Hall, 2005; Pineda). Encouraging groups of boys to sing together may also encourage more boys to participate in singing activities (Adler, 2002).

Music teachers can have discussions with their students about the many different ways of being a boy and the many different ways of being a girl to help bridge gender stereotypes (Sax, 2017). Music from students' own cultures and lives outside of school can be incorporated into music programming (Mizener, 1990; Neu & Weinfeld, 2007; Pineda, 2017; Taylor, 2009). Music teachers can discover which accompaniment instruments students prefer when singing (Hale, 2006).

Supporting male athletes by going to their sporting events can help a music teacher to gain their respect in the music classroom (Bourne, 2009). Music teachers should work with

physical education staff to ensure that sports and music activities do not conflict so students have the opportunity to participate in both types of activities (Harrison, 2008). Being passionate and knowledgeable about singing (Ashley, 2006, 2010; Bennetts, 2013; Nolin, 1973) and forming caring bonds with students (Gurian et al., 2001; Sherban, 1995) can go a long way in promoting positive attitudes toward singing in young boys.

Self-Beliefs About Singing

The self-beliefs that students hold about their abilities have an impact on motivation and learning strategies (Austin et al., 2006; Ritchie & Williamon, 2011). Students who demonstrate capabilities in subjects outside of music are more likely to develop positive self-beliefs regarding their musical capabilities. Students who struggle in other subject areas have the potential to develop negative self-beliefs about their musical capabilities (Hallam, 2002; Power, 2008). Research indicates that boys hold less positive beliefs about their singing voice than girls, beginning as early as grade 1 (Hale, 2006).

This section looks at self-beliefs about one's singing voice. Three terms are discussed: self-concept, self-esteem, and self-efficacy. All three factors relate closely to male students' willingness to engage in singing activities.

Self-Concept in Music

Sichivitsa (2007) defines *self-concept in music* as a student's perceptions of their own musical ability, as well as their perception of adults' opinions of their musical ability. Low self-concept in singing, thinking or believing one cannot sing, can have a great effect on attitudes toward singing. "Comments by others about one's ability, whether voiced or imagined, accumulate as the male forms an estimate of his musical worth" (Svengalis, 1978, p. 7). Parental and teacher feedback can have a large impact on a boy's self-concept in singing (Sichivitsa).

Many male students are likely to use music in their daily lives and sing to the radio or other recorded music. They do not demonstrate complete apathy towards singing, however, singing in the context of a music class may be uncomfortable. Cultural and societal expectations emphasizing performance and perfection in singing may cause some male students to identify themselves as non-singers (Pineda, 2017).

Svengalis (1978) discovered that for boys between grades 3 and 6, self-concept in music was the best predictor of music attitude. A positive self-concept in music would lead to positive attitudes toward music and motivation to participate in music activities (Austin et al., 2006). This is supported by Taylor's (2009) study of grades 3 through 5 students. Svengalis suggested that "[a]ttention to music self-concept...should be at the core of the music curriculum in the very early years of school, especially in the area of singing" (p. 85).

Music teachers can influence positive student self-concepts in singing by creating successful experiences for children in the music classroom. Successful experiences will promote increased participation and growth (Taylor, 2009). Positive reinforcement from the teacher and their peers during the developmental process of singing can help students to feel safe, removing any sense of rejection, fear, humiliation, or failure students may feel when learning to use their voices. Music teachers should strive to help students "form positive attitudes toward singing and embrace singing as an activity for all, rather than as an innate trait for the privileged few" (Pineda, 2017, p. 174).

Self-Esteem in Music

In this section, self-esteem in music is defined as confidence in one's own musical abilities (English Oxford Living Dictionaries, 2018). Vander Ark et al. (1980) surveyed 5,642 students in grades 3 through 6 from sixteen elementary schools in a suburban, Midwestern city in

the United States to determine the relationships between musical attitudes, self-esteem, social status, and grade level. They found that self-esteem had a greater impact on attitudes toward classroom music experiences than social status, sex, and age. Nolin and Vander Ark (1977) suggested that the provision of a nurturing musical environment by parents and teachers would help to promote self-esteem in young students.

Austin (1990) studied grade 5 and 6 students to determine the relationship of music self-esteem to the degree of participation in school and out-of-school music activities. Self-esteem scores were measured using the Self-Esteem of Music Ability Scale developed by Schmitt (1979). Austin found that female students possessed significantly higher levels of music self-esteem than did male students. Students with higher levels of music self-esteem tended to participate in a greater number of music activities. In this study, students displayed lower levels of self-esteem toward music as age level increased. Austin recommended that “teacher efforts to encourage active music participation must begin at the elementary level, with particular attention paid to young males” (p. 29). Austin’s comment is considered in the current study of grade 3 boys, affirming the importance of offering a variety of positive music experiences in younger grades to build the self-esteem boys require for continued participation in music activities in grade 5 and 6.

In order to promote self-esteem in singing, Mizener (1990) suggested that students learn music that can be sung in a comfortable range. Mizener found that “[c]ompared to other grade levels, more sixth graders said the songs were too high, and fewer sixth graders said the songs were pitched comfortably” (p. 157). In their study of grades 4 through 6 students’ attitudes toward singing and general music, Phillips and Aitchison (1998) found that females are more positive toward singing songs that are high and boys prefer singing songs that are low.

According to Fisher (2008), the voice change can occur as early as grade 3 in boys of African descent. Based on this information, boys may already be feeling the effects of the voice change in grades 4 to 6, leading to discomfort singing in their upper register. When programming music that requires singing in the upper range, a teacher should ensure there is a balance between the use of high range and mid-low range within a comfortable tessitura (Phillips, 1995).

Building Confidence and Competence. Boys want to be convinced that they will be successful within a group before participating in an activity. Boys must feel comfortable with an activity in order to participate actively and learn from the experience (Bourne, 2009). Male self-esteem is dependent on their ability to master their environment (Grossman & Grossman, 1994). Personal support from the teacher can help to build confidence in male students and increase their musical achievement (Freer, 2007; Grossman & Grossman).

“Male self-esteem is more oriented toward the self, with energies directed toward uniqueness, competence and possible superiority in a given domain...Boys desire skill and competence” (Freer, 2010, p. 23). Many researchers (Bowman, 1988; Broquist, 1961; Gaston as cited in Svengalis, 1978; Phillips & Aitchison, 1998; Taylor, 2009) have discovered that singing alone in front of others is strongly disliked by young students, especially those in grades 4 through 6. If students are required to present instrument or singing skills independently in front of a group, they need to be given time to practice in order to build their confidence (Sherban, 1995). This will give them time to develop a greater sense of competence and increase their chances of achieving success.

Success singing independently in front of a group will help grade 3 boys to develop the confidence to participate in similar activities in the future, thus increasing their engagement in singing activities. As Hallam (2002) stated, “When a learner has completed a learning task

successfully, this will have an impact on self-esteem and motivation, which will be carried forward to subsequent learning tasks. Conversely, when learning outcomes are negative, motivation is usually impaired” (p. 232).

Studies have revealed sharp declines in music competence beliefs in children between grades 1 and 4 (Wigfield et al. as cited in Austin et al., 2006), which supports the importance of building successful musical experiences from an early age. Austin et al. report evidence in studies revealing that children who believe they are capable musicians may be more likely to participate in music activities. Feelings of competence will also increase the value children place on music-making. Therefore, students who believe they are competent musicians will be more likely to engage in music-making and singing.

Boys are often more comfortable singing for others when they can sing as a character (Green, 1997). Skits, plays, and stage productions become a safe way for boys to share their voices with an audience (Harrison, 2008). Programming creative activities where students can develop dramatic stories and present in character will help to build boys’ confidence in their own singing voices.

To encourage individual singing, music teachers should work to build an environment in the music classroom that is an emotionally safe space for learning and taking risks (Young, 2009). As Pineda (2017) said, “While always maintaining high expectations, music educators should avoid negative comments about their students’ singing abilities, which could have devastating consequences” (p. 173). Environments of encouragement and support surrounding singing will help to develop confidence in male students (Svengalis, 1978). “Teacher recognition of students’ improvement, however slight, could enhance music self-concept” (Svengalis, p. 84).

Self-Efficacy in Music

Self-efficacy is a person's belief that they can successfully complete a task (Bandura, 1977). According to Bandura (1986), the factors that affect self-efficacy beliefs are mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, and verbal/social persuasion (as cited in Ritchie & Williamon, 2011, p. 155). Studies have shown that the strongest influence on self-efficacy beliefs is mastery (Ritchie & Williamon; Usher & Pajares, 2008). When students believe that their efforts have been successful, they establish the confidence needed to attempt the task again. If students are unsuccessful, their confidence to succeed in similar endeavors is lowered (Usher & Pajares). Stephens (2012) surveyed university students about their perceptions of singing throughout life. She found that singing experience had a significant impact on perceptions and beliefs about one's singing ability. Participants revealed that as their successful musical experiences increased, their self-efficacy also increased.

A second influence on self-efficacy beliefs is vicarious experience. Students build their efficacy beliefs through the vicarious experience of observing others (Usher & Pajares, 2008). Peers can influence one's perceptions about their success in singing (Sichivista, 2007). People often compare their singing voices to the voices of peers, family members, vocal models, teachers, and more recently models in the media (Usher & Pajares). This is how they gauge their own ability to sing successfully (Stephens, 2012).

A third influence on self-efficacy beliefs is verbal and social persuasion. Encouragement from parents, teachers, and peers whom a student trusts can boost the student's confidence in their singing abilities. Usher and Pajares (2008) explain: "Supportive messages can serve to bolster a student's effort and self-confidence, particularly when accompanied by conditions and instruction that help bring about success" (p. 754). It is important to note that verbal and social

persuasion are more effective in developing self-efficacy for young children than social comparisons. As children progress through school, formative and summative assessments may cause them to compare their abilities and progress with that of other children (Usher & Pajares).

In a review of literature on self-efficacy, Usher and Pajares (2008) found that self-efficacy is also influenced by emotional and physiological states such as anxiety, stress, fatigue, and mood. High anxiety can weaken self-efficacy. Working to positively influence the physical and emotional well-being of students and reducing negative outlooks can help to strengthen self-efficacy.

Ritchie and Williamon (2011) surveyed 404 children in the United Kingdom between the ages of seven and nine. They measured a number of factors that may influence self-efficacy, including prior music experience, mental well-being, emotional symptoms, conduct problems, hyperactivity, peer problems, social skills, and approaches to music learning. Overall, girls demonstrated higher self-efficacy scores in music than boys. It was discovered that students currently receiving instruction from a music specialist had significantly higher self-efficacy scores than children who were not. Other variables that predicted positive self-efficacy were prosocial scores, time spent reading for pleasure, and wellbeing. For boys, prosocial scores were the second predictor of musical self-efficacy, while for girls, well-being scores were the second predictor. Self-efficacy was low for children who struggled with hyperactivity, poor emotional health, conduct problems, and issues with peers. SES did not have a significant effect on self-efficacy scores.

Prosocial behaviours are those intended to promote social acceptance and friendship (English Oxford Living Dictionaries, 2018). Children who felt accepted by peers had higher self-efficacy in music scores. When students demonstrated a positive sense of well-being and felt

good about themselves, they were more likely to believe they could accomplish a musical task (Ritchie & Williamon, 2011).

Ritchie and Williamon (2011) found a positive correlation between children's involvement in extra-musical activities (dancing and participation in sports) and self-efficacy in music. Involvement in extra-musical activities to promote self-efficacy is supported by Neu and Weinfeld (2007). When boys demonstrate commitment to an area of passion, they are more likely to develop the self-efficacy to try new things at school.

Section Summary

This section on self-beliefs has focused on building positive and successful singing experiences for boys. Encouragement (Usher & Pajares, 2008), positive reinforcement (Pineda, 2017; Svengalis, 1978), parental and teacher support (Freer, 2007; Grossman & Grossman, 1994; Nolin & Vander Ark, 1977; Sichivitsa, 2007), opportunities for practice and mastery (Bourne, 2009; Freer, 2010; Grossman & Grossman; Sherban, 1995; Taylor, 2009; Usher & Pajares), and creating a positive sense of well-being (Ritchie & Williamon, 2011; Usher & Pajares) help to influence positive self-beliefs about singing in boys. Teaching repertoire with appropriate range and tessitura for the developing male voice will help boys to feel more capable (Mizener, 1990; Phillips, 1995; Phillips & Aitchison, 1998). Creating a safe and nurturing environment for singing is also essential (Nolin & Vander Ark, 1977; Sherban).

Chapter Summary

Engaging young boys in the singing process is a complex task and is dependent on many factors. This literature review explored how honouring the learning needs of boys can assist effective delivery of singing instruction. Consideration of male attitudes toward singing and their influences is very important in helping a teacher develop strategies to counter negative attitudes. As Phillips (1992) writes, “without the proper attitude, the psychomotor process breaks down” (p. 24). If a student has a negative attitude toward singing, he will not be able to exhibit the physical skills to sing well. Programming songs and activities that appeal to males’ lives and interests can help to foster positive attitudes and engagement in boys. Providing positive and successful experiences for boys may lead to positive self-beliefs about singing and encourage more boys to continue singing throughout life.

Chapter 3: Methodology

In this study, I undertook teacher action research (Mac Naughton & Hughes, 2009; Pine, 2009), where I, the teacher, acted as the researcher within my own professional setting (Anderson, Herr, & Nihlen, 2007). The study progressed in a series of cycles in which I reflected on the effectiveness of my practice, devised and implemented a plan to improve my practice, generated and examined data to support conclusions, reflected on and modified my practice, and then re-planned (Laprise, 2017). The action research cycle enabled me to respond to student needs as they were revealed through the generation of data (Hendricks, 2006), resulting in the adaptation of planned interventions (Anderson et al., 2007). Adaptations made in the classroom as a result of the research findings led to changes in teaching strategies, in turn supporting student learning.

In teacher action research, “[d]ata from a variety of sources, including qualitative and quantitative measures, are collected and analyzed for the purpose of informing practice” (Hendricks, 2013, p. 4). All results are incorporated into the action research cycle, allowing the research to be continuous, flexible, and continually changing (Hendricks). In this study, descriptive quantitative information (Phillips, 2008) generated from the two student surveys was measured numerically and recorded in chart form. The surveys were administered once at the outset of the study and were used to inform the materials and repertoire selected for teaching and learning over the course of the study. As part of the action research cycle, this programming developed and changed as the study progressed.

Following the administration of the initial surveys, qualitative data were generated within the natural setting of the music classroom (Creswell, 2014). I used a journal to reflect on my interactions with students and the teaching strategies utilized to engage students in singing,

guiding modifications to my teaching practice. Feedback sessions with participants and a critical friend helped me to further understand my journal reflections, address any existing biases in my interpretation of the data, and make modifications to future practice. Peer interviews at the end of the study allowed students to voice their perspectives and reactions to the interventions and strategies used in the classroom. These forms of data were triangulated, analyzed for themes, and presented in narrative form (Phillips, 2008).

Undertaking research with my own students in my own professional setting was an effort to improve the singing experiences of male grade 3 students in my school. Because singing is personal and is closely tied to a student's identity (Phillips, 1992), I felt that this research would be most effective in the context of trusting relationships previously built between me and my students (Adler, 2002). These bonds of trust helped my students to feel safe enough to speak honestly about their perceptions of classroom activities (Brooker, 2001). Having worked with these students in past years, I hold *insider* knowledge about their personalities and learning styles. As well, I have a personal understanding of the community in which I teach (Anderson et al., 2007; Hubbard & Power, 1993). Designing regular music programming to facilitate more positive singing experiences for the boys in my community was most easily facilitated by someone with this *insider* knowledge. My knowledge helped me to include activities that related to the values of the community and students under study. The study revealed authentic results because it was carried out in the students' natural music education environment with their current music teacher (Brooker). Students felt most at ease in a familiar environment, allowing them to express their true opinions about singing. My position as teacher qualified me to do this *insider* research, but also presented some ethical considerations that were addressed in the design of the study and throughout this chapter.

Overview of the Study

Participants in the study were ten grade 3 boys from a rural community in South-Central Manitoba. Participants were from two classes of Grade 3 General Music (3J and 3S) and one class of Grade 2/3 General Music (2/3C). Five students were from class 3J, three were from class 3S, and two were from class 2/3C. This study took place within a mixed gender context, with all students in Grade 3 and 2/3 participating in the activities and materials of instruction. Data were generated from all students in these classes for the duration of the study as part of their learning in music class, but only data from grade 3 male participants were used in this study. Study participants made up 29% of the grade 3 males in the classes under study.

This study sought to explore the following research questions:

1. How does involvement in the selection of music repertoire and activities impact grade 3 boys' engagement in singing?
2. How does incorporating topics of student interest into singing activities impact grade 3 boys' engagement in singing?
3. What accompaniment instruments positively influence engagement in singing for grade 3 boys?
4. How does a psychomotor approach to teaching singing influence grade 3 boys' engagement in singing?
5. How do male role models influence grade 3 boys' engagement in singing?

Engagement

In the program under study, singing is often taught using a repertoire-based approach. Songs for teaching musical concepts are often taught by rote. For performance repertoire, the students sit on the risers or in a circle while the teacher sings a phrase of a song and they sing it back. Songs learned for performances have a clear performance deadline. Disengaged boys often mouth the words or do not sing, do not make eye contact, interrupt the teacher by distracting and touching others, get up out of their seats, ask to use the washroom, focus on anything but the task at hand, and appear restless (cannot sit still). Their bodies are not engaged in the act of singing. They sit in a way that does not support the breath (slumped over), their faces are not expressive, and little effort is put into phonation.

Power (2008) describes engagement as students actively participating, genuinely valuing, and deeply understanding the material taught. I will know that students are engaged when they show interest in the materials being taught and actively sing with their whole bodies. To do this, they will focus on the task at hand (rather than other students or objects in the room), watch and follow the directions of the director/teacher, sit or stand in a way that supports the breath, actively produce sound using the body's singing mechanism, and use their faces and eyes to express the emotions in the music (Phillips, 1992). This will result in fewer interruptions during lessons. Time will seem to go quickly because everyone is actively participating and enjoying the experience. It is anticipated that increased engagement will lead to more learning in a shorter period of time.

In the classes under study, the definition of engagement was discussed midway and towards the end of the study. The teacher wrote the following on the board:

An engaged singer

- watches and follows the director
- sits or stands in a way that supports the breath
- sings actively (no pretending)
- uses their face and eyes to express the emotions in the music
- into it

Figure 1. Definition of an Engaged Singer as Defined to Students.

Being “into it” was described as physically showing enjoyment. Students were shown video examples of what being “into it” looked like. After watching the Manitoba Junior Provincial Honour Choir’s performance of “Rather Be” (skina83, 2015), Walter [a participant in this study] described the singers as “rocking out”, as he could see they were enjoying themselves, moving to the music and clearly “into it”.

Permissions

Permission was sought from the school principal in December 2017 to undertake the study in the following school year. Verbal permission was granted on the premise that action research and teacher inquiry are a part of good teaching practice (Zeni, 2009). Permission was then sought in writing from the school division superintendent in February 2018 and again in May 2018. I met with the superintendent in August 2018. The superintendent was supportive of the project and invited me to present to the school board. A presentation to the school board on August 27, 2018 was followed by the superintendent’s verbal permission to move forward with the project. Written permission to move forward with the project was obtained from the school principal on December 17, 2018 and from the superintendent on December 20, 2018.

The study received approval from the Brandon University Ethics Review Committee on December 13, 2018. In order to carry out an ethical study, it was decided that data would initially be gathered from all students in grade 3 and 2/3. Assent/consent obtained from participants and their parents following the submission of final reports in June 2019 would determine which data could be analyzed and recorded in the study. Data generated by grade 3 boys provided the focus for this study.

In early January 2019, a discussion about the study took place in grade 3 and 2/3 music classes. I discussed the study, my role in the study, and the students' role in the study. I gave the students the opportunity to ask questions. An information note was sent home with students to give to their parents, providing them with initial information about the project as well as the opportunity to ask questions.

To reduce teacher influence on informed consent, consent/assent forms were sent home following the submission and approval of final report cards in June 2019. Forms were sent home on June 18, 2019 and due back to the school on June 25, 2019. In these forms, all grade 3 and 2/3 students were invited to be participants. As not to exclude students from any activities and discussions, all students were part of the discussion about consent forms and all students received a consent form. I made it clear in the discussion about consent forms and in the written consent form that the study focused on grade 3 boys. Students and parents were assured that *no* was an acceptable answer and that they could withdraw consent until June 30, 2019, giving them one and a half weeks to return withdrawal forms. Permission was sought to analyze and share students' collected data in the thesis submitted for my Master of Music Degree as well as any reports of the research submitted for publication. Students and their parents or guardians were given one week to consider the invitation, discuss the information, ask questions, and return the

signed consent form. They were asked to sign two copies of the consent form. One copy was kept by the students and their parents or guardians for their records and one copy was returned to the school (Henricks, 2006).

In order to reduce the risk of my influence on informed consent, students were asked to return permission forms to their homeroom teachers. Once collected, these forms were placed in an envelope and given to me. This removed pressure from students to consent in order to please me and encouraged students to make a decision based on their wishes to be a part of the study. If a student wished to withdraw from the study at any time, a withdrawal form could be obtained from the school office. Once signed by the student and their parents/guardians, withdrawal forms could be returned to the school office. Students and parents understood that they would not be questioned about their reasons for withdrawal. At the completion of the study, no withdrawal forms were submitted to the school office.

Role of the Researcher

Researcher Background

I grew up in rural southern Manitoba on a grain and beef farm. My parents enrolled me in voice and piano lessons at an early age and were very supportive of my musical activities. I loved singing and sang at every given opportunity. I sang in school choirs in elementary and high school as well as the Manitoba Provincial Honour Choir (PHC). In high school I had the opportunity to sing with the Central Manitoba Youth Choir and Eastman Youth Choir. These were pivotal experiences in the construction of my identity as a singer.

I was passionate about my musical activities throughout high school, focusing on singing, song writing, and playing piano. I also had the opportunity to teach voice and piano lessons in my community. From the age of twelve, I knew I wanted to be a school music teacher and upon

graduation made the decision to attend Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) in Winnipeg. My experiences singing in youth choirs inspired me to pursue studies in secondary choral education.

Following the completion of my Bachelor of Music, I went on to pursue my Bachelor of Education at the University of Manitoba. My practicum experiences were in the areas of Senior Years Choir and English Language Arts. Throughout this time, I founded and led a children's choir at my church. At the University of Manitoba, I was exposed to a methods course in elementary music and became very excited about the possibilities in this area.

Upon graduation, I was hired into a position that included teaching K-6 General Music and Grade 7-12 Choir. The following spring, I was offered a job at the school under study teaching full-time K-6 Music. The school had a tradition of handbell choirs, classroom choirs, African drumming, and strong Orff pedagogy. Having completed my Orff Level 1 training, I felt qualified to accept the job and moved into the community to start my new position. Upon the completion of this thesis, I had taught general elementary music for six years.

Over my first four years at my current school, I built a voluntary choir program for students in grades 4 through 6. The choir experienced a number of successes, including collaborations with adult community choirs and a recommendation to the Provincial Competition with the Associated Manitoba Arts Festivals. I started a Grade 7/8 Choir at the grade 7-12 school in the community, which developed into a Grade 4-9 Choir collaboration in the following two years. I invited singers who had previously sung in my choral programs to participate in this new after-school program at my school. This was a successful and rewarding endeavor.

I have had the opportunity to support youth choral programs in the region by serving on the Central Manitoba Choral Association Board. I have also volunteered at the local community

arts festival. I conducted a community women's choir for two seasons, which was a cherished and rewarding experience.

In 2017/2018, I took a one-year leave of absence to complete the coursework for my Master of Music (Education) degree. Over that time, the Grade 4-6 Choir tradition continued. The grade 3 students who participated in this study received music instruction from me in kindergarten and grade 1. In grade 2, they received music instruction from another teacher. Relationships with these students were re-established prior to the commencement of the study.

Positionality

Positionality can be described as the lenses through which I see the world (Anderson et al., 2007). Wasiak (2017) writes, "The current profile of a Canadian music educator is white, middle-class, able, urban, Christian, and female. Therefore, she very likely relates best to students who are similarly white, able, urban, Christian, and middle class" (Butler, Lind, & McKoy, 2007; Younker & Hickey, 2007 as cited in Wasiak, p. 22). I almost fit the aforementioned profile. I am Caucasian (of European descent), middle-class, able, rural, Christian, and female. I do relate best to the students within those demographics. At times I struggle to relate to the opposite gender and to understand their learning needs. The population of my current school is becoming more ethnically diverse, and I sometimes struggle to make pedagogy culturally relevant to students of different ethnicities and cultural backgrounds. Academics have always come naturally to me, so I continue to work to understand students who have diverse learning needs and adapt my programming to facilitate learning for all. My middle-class background can make it difficult for me to relate to those of lower socio-economic status, while also making it difficult for me to understand the privileges of students with high socio-economic status.

Music has always been a priority in my life, although I also participated in athletics. As a music teacher, I am sometimes resentful of the competition for time between athletics and music programs. I have worked to promote flexible scheduling so students involved in athletics can also be involved in extracurricular music programs.

Sports, especially hockey, are very important to many members of my community. I often struggle to understand the strength of commitment some community members have to the sport. I have learned from community members that music is not a popular school subject in hockey dressing rooms, especially on the all-male hockey teams. For me, this leads to difficulty engaging many boys in singing and music class. Hence, it is easy for me to see this sport as a potential enemy of my program. I wish community members would hold the view that it is acceptable to enjoy singing and play sports.

Because of the impact of singing on my identity, I am a promoter of this activity for reasons of increased well-being, involvement in community, development of self-confidence, and provision of artistically fulfilling experiences (Clift, Hancox & Morrison, 2012; Nolin & Vander Ark, 1977). With a vested interest in promoting singing and choral education in Manitoba, it is my sincerest hope that pedagogy informed by this research will increase student engagement and lead to increased learning and confidence in singing for future male students. I believe that every child has the right and the ability to learn how to sing, so I intend to question and disrupt the strong gender binary in my community by teaching my students that singing is not an activity limited to girls or boys, but an activity for every voice.

School Demographics

This section is informed by my work in the community for six years and the 2015-2016 School Community Report (Affleck, 2016). The school in this study is located in a rural town in

South-Central Manitoba. The school has a population of approximately 340 students (Affleck) and is the only public elementary school in the community. Many students are of middle socio-economic status. The demographic is comprised in part of children whose families are involved in the agriculture industry (typically residing on farms) and children who live within the town. Many parents commute to occupations outside of the community. Historically the school has been made up of kindergarten through grade 6 students, but for the year under study, grade 6 programming has been moved to the grade 7-12 school in the community.

Students in grade 1 through grade 5 receive between thirty-two and thirty-four minutes of music instruction every two days (three times per six-day cycle). Kindergarten students receive seventeen minutes of music instruction every two days. There is a designated classroom for music instruction. Every grade has at least two sections, with the number of sections dependent on the current population.

School-wide singing takes place before the winter break when the students gather in the gymnasium to sing Christmas songs and carols. Singing is a large focus of the school music program, with students participating in classroom choirs and combined class choirs in the local arts festival and at their concerts. In grades 4 and 5, students have the opportunity to participate in the Grade 4-5 Choir Program and the Grade 5 Handbell Program (extracurricular). During music classes, students learn to play Orff instruments, African drums, and a variety of pitched and non-pitched percussion instruments. Grade 4 and 5 students also learn to play recorders and ukuleles. The school has a tradition of bringing in a guest artist once a year. The music program is well supported by staff, parents, and community members.

Ethics

Pine (2009) writes, “Action research is change research, a non-linear, recursive, cyclical process of study designed to achieve concrete change in a specific location, context or work

setting to improve teaching/learning” (p. 30). Cole and Knowles (2000) believe that research by teachers is professionally ethical. It requires the researcher to empathize with and care about the participants, which occurs as part of the teacher-student relationship. Teacher research also helps teachers and students to make meaning of their own experiences (Cole & Knowles). Adler (2002) summarizes that the first goal of teacher research “is the understanding and improvement of teacher-researcher’s practice and the learning experiences of their students; this translates next into the possibility of recommendations to improve teaching and learning experiences in the broader educational community” (p. 72).

When developing an ethical study, teachers should consider whether the research methods support or interfere with their primary professional role of caring teacher (Zeni, 2009). My role of teacher-as-researcher required that I pay particular attention to the effect of my influence on the students who chose to participate in this study. Bonds of trust had been formed between me and my grade 3 and 2/3 students and it was important that I did not misuse that trust for the purpose of obtaining the research results that I desired. It was important that I utilized these bonds of trust to help my students feel safe enough to voice their true thoughts and feelings about singing (Brooker, 2000). Much consideration was taken to design a study that allowed students to express these thoughts and feelings.

Legitimacy

To bring legitimacy to the project at its onset, I shared my research plan with administrators, colleagues (school teaching staff), the school board, and the parent advisory council (Schmuck, 2006). Through the sharing of this information, all parties were knowingly involved in the research from the beginning, with the opportunity to ask questions and make thoughtful suggestions (Zeni, 1998). Consistent with good research practice, I will report

research findings to students and the groups mentioned above following the completion of the study (Schmuck, 2006).

Confidentiality/Privacy

Student participation in the study was confidential. Each student was assigned a numeric pseudonym to be used in data generation. Boys were named B1, B2 etc. (Allan, 2012). I created an alphabetical list and assigned each child a numeric pseudonym by writing the pseudonym beside each name. These pseudonyms remained consistent for each student throughout the course of the study to allow for cross-referencing different sources of data. The list of assigned pseudonyms was stored in a secure location. Generated data used these pseudonyms for confidentiality purposes and were stored in a secure location separate from the pseudonym list (Baumfield et al., 2008). Students' names were indicated at the top of paper data generation sheets and changed to numerical pseudonyms prior to storage.

In the case of behavioural or academic issues arising throughout the study, grade 3 and 2/3 homeroom teachers and school administration would have been granted access to the data for the purpose of supporting a child behaviourally or academically. In the event that a child disclosed information about threats to their welfare outside of school within the framework of the study, I maintained my professional responsibility to disclose this information to respective authorities. Throughout the course of the study, homeroom teachers and school administration did not require access to the collected data. There were also no instances when information needed to be disclosed to authorities.

Upon the dissemination of study results, the name of the school and school division have remained confidential and named as a school in rural South-Central Manitoba. The identities of students involved in the study are also confidential. Numeric pseudonyms have been changed to

name pseudonyms in the presentation and dissemination of the data to present the data in a personal manner, as is common in qualitative reporting. Class names have been changed from their original names to classes 3J, 3S, and 2/3C to protect student identity.

Benefits/Risks

The purpose of this study was to adapt programming to increase engagement in singing activities for grade 3 boys. It was anticipated that greater engagement would lead these boys to more positive attitudes and more enjoyment of the subject area (Jones, 2014). It was my hope that by the end of the study boys would become more positive about attending and singing in music class. I also hoped that boys would feel a greater sense of accomplishment in music class, thus boosting their confidence and self-esteem.

The project posed minimal risks to participants as participation was confidential and all study components took place within regularly scheduled music classes. Data generated from surveys, feedback sessions, and interviews were not used in the calculation of grades for school report cards. However, student participation in class activities was considered in the assignment of report card marks and comments. A student's decision whether or not to participate in the study did not affect their grades in music class.

Incentives

Incentives were not offered to participants as this may have encouraged reckless disregard of risks (TCPS2, 2014). This was stated clearly in the consent/assent form (see Appendix C). Upon completion of the study, participating classes received a class reward to celebrate their participation in the study. This reward came in the form of a *Student Choice Class*, where the students chose their favourite activities or games to be played throughout the class period (Jones, 2014). This was similar to other class celebrations incorporated into my

regular music classes and allowed all students to be included. All students were also awarded a Mystery Musician prize (pencil, eraser, or sticker) which was consistent with the behaviour management system used in these classes throughout the year.

Outside the Gender Binary

I chose to look extensively at the differences between males and females because a strong gender binary exists in the community under study. I am aware that some students may not fit within the expectations of the gender binary and did not intend to discriminate against transgendered or gender variant students. Grade 3 students have been identified as the gender indicated by their parents on school intake information. In the case of a female student identifying as male, the student would have been permitted to participate in the study if they so chose. This child could lend a different and valuable perspective to the research on male engagement in singing, likely revealing findings that have not yet been recorded in music education research. In the group of students under study, no female students identified as male and no male students identified as female.

Data Generation and Analysis

Several forms of data were generated and analyzed in this study. First, two initial surveys were administered to determine students' preferred activities in music class, musical backgrounds, preferred music styles, and their interests in and out of school. Activities and repertoire were programmed based on the survey results and information from the literature review. Second, I kept a journal to reflect on the chosen teaching materials, activities, and strategies. Third, students participated in feedback loops to add their perspectives to my interpretation of the data. Fourth, students participated in peer interviews where they discussed and recorded how the songs and activities in music class impacted their feelings, attitudes, and

engagement surrounding singing. As part of the action research cycle, grade 3 and 2/3 music programming evolved and changed in response to teacher, student, and peer reflections and feedback.

To ensure validity of the research findings, I discussed my interpretations of the data with a critical friend throughout the research process. My critical friend helped to challenge my biases and assumptions and provide ideas for further planning. Multiple sources of data were triangulated to ensure the credibility of the findings.

In the case of participant absences during the initial surveys or peer interviews, arrangements were made for data generation at an alternate time, when possible. Two feedback loop sessions were planned, so participants who were absent for one session had the opportunity to participate in the following session. See Appendix M for a timeline of planned interventions.

Initial Survey Instruments

I developed two survey instruments to be administered to all grade 3 and 2/3 students at the beginning of the study: the Music Listening Preferences and Interests Inventory (see Appendix D), and the Music Activity Preference Inventory (see Appendix H). Due to time constraints put on the study by numerous snow days and cancellations, the Music Activity Preference Inventory was adapted into a simpler form called the Favourite Music Activities Poll (see Appendix I).

These survey instruments were designed so I could administer them to students again in future years. The popular music example in the MLPPII would require updating to a current example yearly, but the other examples could remain the same based on their justification. Upon completion of the study, I hope to share these instruments with other educators for possible use in their music programs.

Music Listening Preferences and Interests Inventory (MLPII). I designed the MLPII in two sections. One class period was used for the completion of each section, totalling two class periods (thirty-two minutes for classes 3S and 3J and thirty-four minutes for class 2/3F).

Section One consisted of eight questions for students to answer in written form. Students received a student answer sheet and I read the questions aloud. Open-ended questions were used to provide information and insight into students' musical preferences and general interests (Hale, 2006). Student responses were recorded and analyzed in chart form. Student responses were recorded as well as the number of students who indicated the same response. I worked to incorporate these interests and preferences into grade 3 and 2/3 programming.

In *Section Two* (questions 9-19), students were presented with eleven musical style categories that included Western and non-Western musics. By grade 3 and 2/3 in the community under study, students often have a good vocabulary of Western musical styles from their exposure to music listening in their home environments. Conversations in past years' music classes have revealed this exposure. I chose examples of Western music styles that grade 3 and 2/3 students in rural South-Central Manitoba may have had some exposure through radio listening. These styles are reflective of the radio stations available to listeners in rural South-Central Manitoba. The chosen style examples became indicators of students' preferences for instrumentation, melody, rhythm, tempo, texture (layering of sounds), and timbre. Student preferences informed the musical elements I chose to include in choral arrangements and instructional songs. See Appendix D for a list of musical elements in each example.

All musical style examples included vocals because of this study's focus on singing. The featured Western styles, including a Canadian Indigenous example, were chosen because I feel they would be realistic to teach in a singing class at this grade level.

The chosen non-Western styles were representative of the immigrant populations in the school under study, including people from Mexico, Syria, Eritrea, and the Philippines. School administrators were consulted to determine the origin of immigrant families in the school. One example was chosen for each style to keep the survey as simple as possible for grade 3 and 2/3 students. To demonstrate that vocal music can be performed by males and females, I alternated between examples of male and female singers. Examples were short to maintain the survey administration time of one class period.

A short 30-50 second musical example was played for each style and students selected “I like it”, “I’m not sure”, or “I don’t like it”. These responses were paired with images of happy, indifferent, and sad faces. The format of this portion of the survey was adopted from Hale’s (2006) Student Survey, in which students were asked to respond to statements about singing ability by choosing one of the following answers: “Yes”, “Not Sure”, or “No”, paired with images of happy, indifferent, and sad faces.

I chose examples that I felt were appropriate for grade 3 and 2/3 listeners, with specific attention to lyrics. Lyrics were free of foul language and discussed themes that could be openly discussed with students at the grade 3 level. I included examples by Canadian artists, as this is required by the Manitoba Music Curriculum (Government of Manitoba, 2011). Occasion/holiday songs, silly songs, and action songs were not included in the survey because I had already decided to include them in grade 3 and 2/3 programming. Success programming occasion/holiday songs in previous years helped to guide this decision. The literature indicates that humour can be used to engage boys in learning (Hall, 2005; Neu & Weinfeld, 2007), influencing my decision to program silly songs. The literature also indicates the need for gross motor movement in the learning of boys (Bourne, 2009; Ingahalikar et al., 2014; Sherban,

1995), so action songs were programmed to meet this need. Students were given the opportunity to include occasion/holiday songs, silly songs, or action songs in their answer to question 20: “What is your favourite style of music?”. Justifications for the chosen song examples can be found in Appendix S. Note that questions one through eight make up *Section 1* of the survey, while *Section 2* begins with question nine.

In question 20 of the MLP II, students were asked to write the name of their favourite style of music. Some student responses differed from the styles presented in questions nine through nineteen. Answers to this unstructured question helped to confirm and add to the results of the previous questions (Broquist, 1961). Student-selected styles indicated in question 20 that differed from those presented in the previous eleven questions were recorded so they could be included in grade 3 and 2/3 music programming. Musical preference results from *Section Two* have been presented in chart form in Chapter 4. Responses were recorded for “I like it”, “I’m not sure”, “I don’t like it”, and “favourite” categories.

To ensure the content-related evidence of validity of this survey prior to its administration, the instrument was submitted to a jury of six elementary music teachers in Southern Manitoba to determine its clarity and appropriateness. The criteria for the selection of these teachers was as follows: currently teach Grade 3 General Music, obtained an education degree with a music background or a music education degree, certified to teach in Manitoba schools, 1-20 years teaching experience. The selection of these music educators is an example of homogeneous purposive sampling which focuses on one particular subgroup in which all the sample members are similar, such as a particular occupation (Brewerton & Millward, 2001; Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill as cited in Dudovskiy, 2018). I used personal judgement, along with the criteria written above to select three teachers in the sample to help achieve the research

objectives (Adams, Khan, Raeside, & White, 2007). The remaining three teachers, referred by my advisor, also conformed to these criteria.

The newly designed instrument was mailed to the survey reviewers, along with consent forms, withdrawal forms, feedback forms, and an audio CD of the listening examples.

Completed forms were returned to me by the end of January 2019. Based on feedback from the teacher reviewers, I made changes and adaptations to the initial survey instrument. Feedback, adaptations, and changes are detailed in Appendix Q and Appendix R.

Based on reviewer feedback for Section 1, questions were adapted to become more accessible to grade 3 and 2/3 students. Wording was simplified and questions 1, 2, 4, and 5 were rewritten in a form that allowed students to circle their answers. Small changes to wording were made to create consistency throughout the instrument. The word “singer” was used to describe one person who sings, rather than the word “artist”. In Section 2, listening examples for the rock and Canadian folk styles were changed based on reviewer feedback.

Music Activity Preference Inventory (MAPI). I designed the Music Activity Preference Inventory (MAPI) to collect data about students’ preferred activities in music class and musical activities outside of school (see Appendix H). It was based on an inventory originally developed by Broquist (1961) and later adapted by Taylor (2009).

The original MAPI was designed by Broquist (1961) to determine musical activity preferences of students in grades 2 to 6. To ensure the validity of the initial Likert-style instrument, Broquist selected component items from pedagogical methods and books that had been designed by many different music educators. He also submitted the instrument to a jury of 15 experienced music teachers for critical examination. The jury suggested appropriate additions, indicated items that should be eliminated, and made constructive comments about the instrument.

After making the suggested changes, the new edition of the inventory and check sheet were trialed in two local schools to determine practicability. Based on these trials, adjustments were made to content and length of the inventory.

Taylor's Musical Attitude Inventory (MAI) is an adaptation of Broquist's (1961) MAPI and is similar in design to the inventories used by several other researchers (Nolin, 1973; Nolin & Vander Ark; 1977; Pogonowski, 1985; Vander Ark et al., 1980). It was used to determine students' attitudes toward musical activities. The music educators of students who participated in Taylor's study reviewed the items of the MAI and made suggestions for additions and deletions. To ensure content-related evidence of validity (Messick, 1993), Taylor based her activities on those observed in general music classrooms.

I adapted Taylor's MAI to measure student preferences toward musical activities. While Taylor's list of activities was not divided into categories, I divided activities into the following categories: Instrument Playing, Listening/Analyzing, Performing, Creating, Singing, and Activities Outside of the Classroom. With 43 questions to answer, I was aware that students might quickly become overwhelmed by the length of the survey. These categories provided natural places for students to pause and collect their thoughts. The categories were also designed to help me organize and analyze themes from the data.

The final Activities Outside of the Classroom section (items 35 through 42) was intended to provide me with information on each child's home influences and musical background. This would give me an indication of the musical skills already acquired by students and insight into how music from home cultures may be incorporated and shared in music class (Pineda, 2017).

Taylor included 34 activities in her survey, while I included 42. To reflect the students' musical experiences at the school under study, I adapted Taylor's list of activities. Items 1

through 34 were activities included in the students' previous musical instruction according to the Grade 2 Manitoba Music Curriculum (Government of Manitoba, 2011), supporting the content-related evidence of validity of the instrument.

I added Question 43 to the survey. It asked, "What is your favourite music activity in school?" Answers to this unstructured question were intended to confirm and augment the results of the structured portion of the survey (Broquist, 1961).

Following the administration of the MLP II, it was made clear to me that the MAPI would likely be difficult for students of this age to understand and complete in its current form. It would also take more than one class period to complete. Due to time constraints caused by multiple snow days and school cancellations, the MAPI was adapted into the Favourite Music Activities Poll (FMAP). The FMAP distilled the various music activities into six categories: playing instruments, listening to music, reading and writing music, dancing, singing, and playing music games. Students were asked to rate each activity on a scale of 1-6, with 1 being their favourite and 6 being their least favourite. Questions about musical activities outside the classroom were answered previously in the MLP II, so I saw no need to ask about these activities again in the FMAP.

Programming

Discussions about what it means to be engaged in singing took place with grade 3 and 2/3 students numerous times throughout the study. The first conversation took place when the initial information letters were sent home at the beginning of January 2019. I defined the meaning of an *engaged singer* to students at the beginning of April and again in June prior to the completion of peer interviews. Clear and simple language was used to discuss what engagement in singing looks and feels like. See *Figure 1* for a detailed list of the descriptors used in these discussions.

The definition of an *engaged singer* was posted on the whiteboard numerous times throughout the study so I could refer to it during music lessons. Although the word engagement was not used continually throughout the study, statements like, “Is your body ready for singing?” were used often as prompts for students to engage their minds and bodies in the singing process.

The results of the initial survey instruments influenced the selection of grade 3 and 2/3 repertoire and activities for the duration of the study. Preferred styles of music, activities, and students’ interests were featured in the programming of vocal repertoire, while those not preferred by students were avoided.

These strategies for programming decisions followed Pineda’s (2017) advice to music teachers:

[M]usic educators need to incorporate the music that their students value into their curricula, not only because the inclusion of their musics can serve as a powerful motivator for participation, but also because students will feel respected by their teachers honoring and validating their cultural identities.
(p. 179)

Students were encouraged to share about the music from their home cultures in the MLP II so that their cultural identities could be honoured in grade 3 and 2/3 music programming.

The literature review provided strategies for honouring the learning needs of boys and promoting engagement in singing. Below are the strategies I chose to incorporate into regular music classes. More specific strategies developed over the course of the study, including programming songs with funny and weird words as well as songs that offer the right amount of challenge. Reflections on these strategies were recorded in my research journal and are discussed in Chapters 4 and 5.

Movement. The literature indicates the need for gross motor movement in the learning of boys (Bourne, 2009; Ingallhalikar et al., 2014; Sherban, 1995). Movement-based activities, like

singing games, were included in lessons regularly. Trainor (2017) studied the influence of a caregiver's movements on babies and found that if people move together, they are more likely to help one another. Movement activities can help to foster a sense of community and teamwork in the classroom, further helping to engage students.

Humour. The literature indicates that humour can be used to engage boys in learning (Hall, 2005; Neu & Weinfeld, 2007). I collected silly songs that could be used to engage boys in singing and incorporated them into music classes. A silly song has lyrics that do not always make sense. Because they do not make sense, they make students laugh and use their imaginations. Silly songs that I featured in my programming were: "Say What?" (Jennings, 2007), "Tony Chestnut" (Thompson, 2019), "My Aunt Came Back" (Kriske & DeLelles, 2006), "Sweetly Sings the Donkey" (Barron, 1993), "I'm a Bone-Legged Chicken" (Brumfield, 2006), and "Once an Austrian Went Yodelling" (Kriske & DeLelles, 2007).

Psychomotor Approach to Singing. To develop students' self-confidence and increased engagement, I taught singing using a psychomotor approach (Phillips, 2005; Welch, 1997). Research has revealed that when students understand how to consciously coordinate vocal pitch movement in their bodies, they gain confidence in their singing abilities (Welch). I used visual reinforcers and verbal feedback as recommended by Welch. Welch promotes the use of non-threatening, "depersonalized feedback" (p. 715), where the teacher describes singing behaviours rather than judging singing as being proper or improper. An example of depersonalized feedback would be, "Please relax your jaw and open your mouth. Your sound will be freer when you open your mouth to create space" accompanied by a visual reinforcer of how to execute this skill.

In line with Welch's (1997) suggestions for providing non-threatening feedback to developing singers, Pineda (2017) supports avoiding negative, personalized comments about

singing abilities such as, “That was wrong. You did not open your mouth enough to produce a free sound.” Negative feedback often causes learners to react defensively and disengage from the singing process (Pineda).

Svengalis (1978) promotes creating environments of encouragement and support surrounding singing to help develop confidence in male students. Rather than providing negative feedback, which can lead to feelings of shame, resentment, and reluctance, I focused on using positive feedback and celebrating student improvement as often as possible (Baldock, 2009; Neu & Weinfeld, 2007). Positive feedback and encouragement, both essential elements for effective learning, also help to strengthen the caring bonds between teacher and students (Gurian et al., 2001; Sherban, 1995).

Incorporating body movement (kinesthetic reinforcers) into the teaching of specific singing skills is another effective strategy for teaching children to sing (Liao & Davidson, 2016). I incorporated kinesthetic reinforcers into my teaching. For example, students were asked to place their hands on their abdomens when practicing deep breathing to feel the inhalation and exhalation of their breath. They would then be asked to do this in order to feel their inhalation prior to singing. This helped students to develop an awareness of the depth of breath required to produce an energetic sound. I also provided visuals of the parts of the body used in singing to help students understand their own vocal mechanisms (Freer, 2007; Welch, 1997). We looked specifically at videos of the mechanics of breathing and images of the vocal folds.

Single-Sex Singing Opportunities. To encourage engagement in singing, Adler (2002) recommends allowing boys to sing designated male parts with their male peers. This will help boys to recognize the unique timbral qualities of male voices (Phillips, 2003; Pineda, 2017) and provide peer social support (Adler). My critical friend also advocated for this strategy.

I incorporated single-sex singing opportunities into my programming by assigning boys their own vocal part in selected songs. During rounds, boys sang one part while girls sang the other (Bazzy, 2010). This created a source of competition in rehearsal, which in turn helped to motivate young male singers. This also gave the teacher the opportunity to draw attention to each group's strengths and successes.

Examples of Male Singing. Teaching students how male singing is important to many cultures around the world can help to make singing relevant to young boys (Hall, 2005; Pineda, 2017). I used examples of males singing as often as possible to demonstrate that males sing in many different contexts. An example of a male Ukrainian choir singing the national anthem at a hockey game was used to demonstrate males singing in a current local context. An example of the a capella group Pentatonix was used as a starting point for discussions about singing being an appropriate activity for both boys and girls (Sax, 2017) and the different timbres of male and female voices. An example of the Winnipeg Boys Choir was presented to help facilitate a discussion about treble and changed male voices. More examples are detailed in Chapter 4. I also stressed that activities in the music room are appropriate for all students.

Male Role Models. Research supports that the influence of a child's father is very important in the child's decision to engage in singing (Roulston & Misawa, 2011; Svengalis, 1978). At the end of February 2019, I sent home a note inviting parent and grandparent volunteers to come sing with the grade 3 and 2/3 classes. It was my hope that a male parent or grandparent might come forward. Unfortunately, no parents volunteered to come in and sing with the classes under study. A local male artist was invited to do a two-week residency with all the students in the school. This opportunity demonstrated to my students that males do sing and gave us the opportunity to talk about the difference in timbres between my voice and the guest

artist's voice. A grade 7 male alumnus of the program under study was invited to come sing with the grade 3 students. He was able to visit two of the classes. The school guidance counsellor (male) was invited to sing a song with the students. He was able to visit one of the classes.

Student Creativity. Improvisation and composition are a large part of my music program. I have seen that students take more ownership over the performance of their own creations than the performance of other works. The literature supports that creativity plays an important role in the way boys learn (Power, 2008), so I brought in a local male singer/song-writer to lead song-writing sessions with the students. Prior to the sessions with our guest artist and the commencement of this study, I verbally polled the students about their interests and sent a list of these interests to the artist. He chose the song topic, sharks and gum, based on these interests and invited the students to help him brainstorm ideas for the words and song title. The guest artist wrote the melody and created the background music. Based on the brainstorm session with the students, he also developed lyrics to go along with the melody. This collaborative song, "Billie-Bob Sharky", was performed at the Grade 2-3 Concert.

Utilizing technology for student compositions is also supported in the literature (Mason, 2009). The sessions with our guest artist incorporated opportunities for students to create their own music using GarageBand on iPads. Students learned how to record their voices and add electronic instrumental accompaniment. The guest artist created the backing track for the class composition in GarageBand prior to the workshop sessions. He used this track as an example of a completed composition in GarageBand. The guest artist demonstrated how to use the GarageBand program by using screen-mirroring capabilities on the class projector.

Student Interests and Preferences. The information obtained from the initial survey instruments helped me to implement student preferences and interests into the repertoire and

activities I selected for regularly scheduled grade 3 and 2/3 music classes. The literature supports incorporating student musical preferences into classroom learning activities (Mizener, 1990; Taylor, 2009). Choosing repertoire that connected with students' interests helped to engage and motivate students (Nolin, 1973; Taylor). Getting to know what songs my male students favoured helped me to program songs that boys enjoy and helped to develop feelings of enjoyment associated with singing (Neu & Weinfeld, 2007; Pineda, 2017).

Building Competence and Confidence. Boys want to be convinced that they will be successful within a group before trying the activity (Bourne, 2009). To help boys feel comfortable, competent, and confident executing skills for an activity (such as singing), they require adequate practice time to develop their skills. This will increase their chances of achieving success. Success presenting in front of a group will help boys to develop the confidence to participate in similar activities in the future (Hallam, 2002).

I scheduled practice time (in pairs and whole-group) for students to work on their singing skills. I also consulted with students to see if they felt ready to present their skills when they were required to present in pairs. If students did not feel prepared to present in pairs, more practice time was granted. I hoped to provide more practice time for large groups as we prepared for the Grade 2-3 Concert, but an abundance of adverse weather and snow days shortened the time that was available.

Journaling

An important aspect of action research is journaling, where the researcher records personal thoughts relating to the study. This includes keeping a record of data generation and methodological decisions, as well as recording the researcher's reflections, insights, and future action steps (Anderson et al., 2007).

I kept a journal throughout the research process. Reflections on changes in programming were recorded approximately once per week. Classroom observations about students' reactions to chosen interventions were also included in the journal. The textual data from the journal were studied for patterns. These patterns provided a basis for larger themes that emerged from the data (Hendricks, 2006). I paid special attention to data that did not fit into previously determined themes. These unexpected data had the potential to be helpful in developing strategies for engaging boys in singing throughout the study and in the future. Details of this analysis are included in Chapter 4.

Numeric pseudonyms were used when referring to specific students in the journal. Using numeric pseudonyms supported data triangulation with feedback loops and peer interviews. The guiding questions below helped to provide responses to the research questions of the study.

Guiding questions to respond to research questions 1, 2, 4 and 5:

1. What engagement strategies (musical repertoire, interest topics, psychomotor approach, male role models) were incorporated into lessons and how?
2. What did you notice about the reactions and participation of students?
3. Did engagement change? How do you know?

Guiding question to answer research question 3:

4. How did students react to the accompanying instrument when singing?

Final guiding question for the action research cycle (Hendricks, 2013):

5. Moving forward, what changes will you make to your practice?

Peer Interviews

Interviews are a commonly used form of data generation in action research studies as the researcher seeks to explore the feelings and perceptions of the participants (Anderson et al, 2007). Because power relationships exist in schools between teachers and students, teachers-as-researchers need to be aware of these relationships and create ways for students' true opinions to be revealed in interview situations. There are strategies that can be used to lessen the impact of power relationships in interviews. With younger children, the process can be a task in which the children feel familiar like a worksheet or a sorting activity (Hall, 2005). Props and visual prompts can also be used to "soften the effects of the high-control, adult-dominant, question-and-answer format" (Brooker, 2000, p. 166). I chose to use the strategy of peer interviewing to eliminate teacher influence from the interviews and involve all students in the classes under study. These peer interviews were completed by pairs of students during regularly scheduled music classes and incorporated visual prompts. Filling out reflection forms after a concert is a common task in my music classroom. This was a similar activity, with the addition of students asking one another questions. This process enabled students to assist one another in the extension of their thinking (Brooker).

To balance the role of teacher and researcher, I ensured that the appropriate supports were in place for the completion of the peer interviews. Prior to the completion of the peer interviews, I demonstrated practice questions with a student volunteer. First, I asked the questions and wrote the volunteer's answers on the SmartBoard. Following this, the volunteer and I switched roles. The volunteer had the opportunity to interview me and write my answers on the SmartBoard. We discussed paraphrasing and the importance of writing the main ideas from a partner's answer. Students were not required to write in full sentences. I also instructed students to do their best with spelling.

Following the peer-modeling example, I projected the peer interview questions on the SmartBoard and went through them with the class. I read the questions aloud and gave the students the opportunity to ask questions for clarification. This aided those students with lower reading proficiency. Strong readers and writers were placed with weaker readers and writers to ensure all students were supported in their reading and writing skills. These pairings were determined with the input of the grade 3 and 2/3 homeroom teachers. I circulated the room to offer assistance and ask clarification questions throughout the peer interview process.

Eight peer interview questions emerged from the review of literature. I designed the interview questions to address the research questions in the study. The emergence of each question is detailed below. This study gained ethics approval on December 13, 2018. Activities related to the study officially started in January, so in this case, *this school year* refers to January to June 2019.

1. Tell me about a time when you most enjoyed singing this school year.

Suggestions for engaging boys and promoting enjoyment of singing in the literature include: utilizing familiar songs (Pineda, 2017), utilizing songs that boys favour (Neu & Weinfeld, 2007), incorporating preferred activities into the teaching of singing (Bowles, 1998), and integrating student interests into the music classroom (Nolin, 1973; Taylor, 2009). This study worked to incorporate these suggestions into grade 3 and 2/3 music programming. This question sought to understand which experiences have successfully made singing enjoyable for grade 3 boys.

2. What activities helped you to engage in singing this school year?

The literature refers to a number of activities that can help to engage boys in singing including: teaching performance songs with the incorporation of movement and activities

boys enjoy (Bourne, 2009; Bowles, 1998; Bowman, 1988; Freer, 2010; Jones, 2014; Young, 2009), utilizing songs that incorporate movement such as singing games (Jones, 2014; Power, 2008), teaching singing using a psychomotor approach (Freer; Phillips, 2003; Phillips & Aitchison, 1998; Turton & Durrant, 2002; Welch, 1997), and introducing boys to male role models who sing (Hall, 2005; Roulston & Misawa, 2011; Svengalis, 1978). This question sought to understand which specific activities were most successful in engaging boys in singing.

3. Your teacher worked to pick songs based on student interests (like animals and sports). How did singing about student interests make you feel?

Incorporating student interests into the teaching of music for the purpose of fostering engagement is supported in the literature review (Nolin, 1978; Taylor, 2009; Vercelletto, 2016). This interview question sought to answer research question two: how does incorporating topics of student interest into singing activities impact grade 3 boys' engagement in singing?

4. Tell me what you learned about your singing voice this year.

How does this make you feel about singing?

Many sources promote using a psychomotor approach when teaching children to sing (Allan, 2012; Bourne, 2009; Phillips, 1992, 2003; Phillips & Aitchison, 1998; Turton & Durrant, 2002; Welch, 1997). Phillips and Aitchison found that psychomotor skills instruction helped to develop more positive attitudes toward music class in students in grades 4-6. Attitudes are closely related to engagement. A better understanding of one's own vocal anatomy, physiology, vocal production, and vocal health may help boys to develop a new ownership of their singing voices (Welch). This interview question sought

to answer research question four: how does a psychomotor approach to teaching singing influence grade 3 boys' engagement in singing?

5. Do you feel your singing has improved since the beginning of the school year?

Circle: Yes / No

Why or why not?

Previous research states that teaching students about their vocal physiology and how to use the voice in a technically efficient way can help to build student confidence and a sense of responsibility for their own vocal accomplishments (Allan, 2012; Phillips, 1992; Welch, 1997), thus influencing engagement. Making sufficient practice time available in music class will help to increase boys' likelihood of achieving success in the execution of singing skills (Sherban, 1995). This question sought to measure the influences of psychomotor skills instruction and sufficient practice time on student engagement and skill development. It also reflects student self-beliefs in singing (Ritchie & Williamon, 2011).

6. Describe what it feels like to sing with instruments.

With which instrument do you prefer to sing?

Circle one:

No accompaniment

Guitar

Drums

Piano

Orff instruments

Ukulele

Accompaniment CD

Other: _____

Several studies indicate that students prefer singing with musical accompaniment rather than singing without accompaniment (Broquist, 1961; Hale, 2006; Mizener, 1990; Nolin, 1973). Hale found that students related more to the guitar, while Mizener found that students enjoyed singing with recorded accompaniments and drums. Instruments that are readily available and regularly used for accompaniment in my grade 3 and 2/3 music classes have been included in this question. This interview question sought to answer research question three: what accompaniment instruments positively influence engagement in singing for grade 3 boys?

7. Which picture most inspires you to sing? (Circle one)



Research claims that strong male singing role models can positively influence boys (Freer, 2010; Hall, 2005; Markus & Ruvolo as cited in Hallam, 2002; Pineda, 2017; Svengalis, 1978). This question sought to understand the influence of a male role model on male motivation and engagement in singing (research question five). Boys who selected the picture of the male singing affirmed the claims in the literature that male role models do positively influence male engagement in singing (Hall; Pineda; Svengalis).

8. Do you feel that singing is an activity for boys and girls?

Circle: Yes / No

Why or why not?

The literature states that, many times, boys establish their gender by separating from that which is female (Sax, 2017; Sherban, 1995). Welch (1997) and Sherban speculated that boys see female teachers singing and therefore see singing as a feminine activity. Fewer male teachers in primary schools often limit the amount of exposure boys have to male singing models (Skelton, 2001). Throughout the course of the study, male students were exposed to men and older boys singing, therefore showing them that singing is appropriate for both boys and girls. This interview question sought to answer research question five: how do male role models influence grade 3 boys' engagement in singing?

Participants were given between one and three 32 to 34-minute class periods to complete the questions in pairs. Most students were paired with partners of the same grade level and gender, but some exceptions were made to provide students with the strongest peer support possible (as recommended by homeroom teachers). Mixed grade and gender pairings were more prevalent in class 2/3C. Each group required varying amounts of time. During the administration of the interviews, students helped one another read the questions. They also discussed and clarified their answers before writing them down. These interviews were completed by all students in each class, male and female. Peer interview data from grade 3 male participants were analyzed and recorded in this study.

Interview findings were triangulated with other data sources to affirm themes and inform research results (Hendricks, 2006). Data that did not fit within these themes were highlighted and written about separately to acknowledge all student perspectives.

Increasing Validity

Critical Friend. Action researchers must reflect not only on the research questions, but on how their positionality influences their views of reality. I worked with a critical friend who questioned and challenged my assumptions (Anderson et al., 2007). This person helped review my research questions and teaching strategies (Zeni, 1998). He also provided alternate interpretations of the data and gave me ideas for future action steps in the study (Hendricks, 2006).

My critical friend was an experienced male music teacher from outside of my school division. I chose this person because of his understanding of the rural Manitoba teaching context. He also was not a collaborator in the study (Hendricks, 2006). His male perspective and extensive teaching experience offered a perspective that was different from my own. He had access to the data that I decided to share verbally. Student names were not used in the sharing of data. My critical friend signed a confidentiality agreement to ensure that the data I chose to share were protected. The meetings with my critical friend are discussed further in Chapter 4.

Feedback Loops. Baumfield, Hall, and Wall (2008) encourage *feedback loops* throughout the teacher action research process. This means that students are presented with the researcher's interpretation of the data (Hendricks, 2006) and have the opportunity to add, explain or validate (agree/disagree with) the interpretations the researcher is making. In action research, this is also referred to as member checking (Creswell, 2014), when analysis and interpretation of the data is shared with the participants for verification and input (Anderson et al., 2007). This was a good way to “reduce bias and increase credibility” (Hendricks, p. 108). I incorporated two of these sessions into music classes over the course of the study. These feedback loops not only benefitted me as the researcher, but also benefitted the students' thinking about their own learning and development (Baumfield et al.).

Feedback loop sessions took place in full class groups. As these sessions gave students the opportunity to share their perspectives, some participant comments were recorded as data. All student comments were noted, but only perspectives of study participants were recorded in the study results. Study participant comments were transcribed using numeric pseudonyms from the numeric pseudonym list. These comments were analyzed and organized into themes. Comments that did not fit within the themes were also noted and included in the research findings. These different perspectives allowed me to address and meet the learning needs of a broader representation of learners.

Comments from non-participants were not included in the study results, but were used to address student learning needs in the classroom. This fit with the ethics of action research, balancing my role as teacher and researcher (Zeni, 2009).

Triangulation. Multiple sources of data were generated throughout the study including: teacher observations through journaling, feedback loops, and peer interviews. This allowed me to compare and validate research findings (Hendricks, 2006).

Modifications to the Original Timeline

The study was originally planned to take place from September 2018 to June 2019. Due to delays in the approval process, the study did not begin until January 2019, condensing the timeline significantly. The timeline for January and February was constantly being adjusted due to snow days and school cancellations. The shortage of teaching days led to the adaptation of the MAPI to fit within the project timeline.

The original timeline had indicated meetings with my critical friend in December 2018 and April 2019. These meetings happened in March 2019 and May 2019. Because the second

meeting was held at the end of May, there was little time remaining in the school year to adjust my teaching strategies and repertoire based on peer feedback.

Due to the study's late start, feedback loops took place in April 2019 and June 2019 rather than December 2018 and April 2019 as originally planned. Very little time was available to complete Feedback Loop #2, as it was pushed right to the end of June. Originally, I had planned to facilitate this session around the same time as the second meeting with my critical friend, but the necessity of completing assessments for June report cards took precedence. Completing peer interviews also took precedence, as one feedback loop had already been completed. Facilitating the session at the end of June limited the amount of information provided in this session by students, as student attention spans were much shorter at this time of year. June is very hectic for a teacher, so designing Feedback Loop #2 at this time of year limited my ability to reflect on the whole study and formulate questions that would reveal student perspectives regarding chosen repertoire. Holding the feedback loop so late in the school year did not provide adequate time for me to make adjustments to programming based on student feedback.

The shortened timeline for the study only allowed time from mid-April to mid-June to teach repertoire selected in response to student feedback from Feedback Loop #1. This did not allow time for debriefing the repertoire selections with the students. If more time had been available, student perspectives regarding the chosen songs and activities could have been discussed as the repertoire was taught.

Peer Interviews were completed in June rather than May as originally planned. These interviews took much longer to complete than anticipated, as many students struggled to maintain a strong work ethic into the early summer months.

Although some of these changes were unfortunate and limited the amount of time available to complete study activities, the researcher and participants were able to complete many major components of the study, as originally planned.

See Table 1 below for an outline of how the study unfolded. Research activities have been divided into four phases.

Table 1

Outline of Research Phases

Phase	Research Activities Within Each Phase
Phase 1 (January to mid-February)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Guest artist residency with a focus on song-writing incorporating GarageBand technology ✓ Administration of MLPII and FMAP
Phase 2 (mid-February to mid-April)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Selection of repertoire for Grade 2-3 Concert and local arts festival informed by MLPII and FMAP results and literature review ✓ All grade 2 and 3 students performed in the Grade 2-3 Concert ✓ Meeting with critical friend ✓ Classes 3S and 3J performed selected concert repertoire in the local arts festival
<i>Feedback Loop #1 (feedback gathered from students)</i>	
Phase 3 (mid-April to June)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Repertoire and activities for remainder of study programmed based on findings from student surveys, feedback from critical friend, Feedback Loop #1, and the literature review ✓ Students in 2/3C suggested and voted on songs ✓ Meeting with critical friend
Phase 4 (June)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Students participated in peer interviews
<i>Feedback Loop #2 (feedback gathered from students to inform music programming in future years)</i>	

Chapter Summary

This methodology was designed to minimize teacher influence on participant consent and data generation. By having students return consent/assent forms to their homeroom teachers and withdrawal forms to the school office, students felt free to make their own decisions about participation in the study without influence from the researcher. Information about this teacher action research study was presented to school teaching staff, students, parents, the school board, and the parent advisory council, providing the opportunity for students, parents, and community members to ask questions about the study.

Data were generated from study participants in the following ways: initial surveys, researcher journaling, feedback loops, and peer interviews. Peer interviews gave students the freedom to express their honest opinions about singing. Grade 3 music programming was designed to incorporate students' musical preferences and personal interests, with data generated from the initial surveys as well as suggestions gathered from the literature review.

To increase validity of the findings, a critical friend was consulted to reveal biases in the interpretation of the data and offer differing perspectives. Feedback loops acted as a form of member checking where students affirmed or offered differing perspectives on the interpretation of these data. To increase the credibility of the findings, multiple sources of data were generated to corroborate research findings (Hendricks, 2006).

Chapter 4: Findings

The study unfolded in four phases: Phase 1 (January to mid-February), Phase 2 (mid-February to mid-April), Phase 3 (mid-April to June), and Phase 4 (June). In Phase 1, a local male guest artist visited the school to do a two-week residency with students on song-writing incorporating GarageBand technology. Surrounding the sessions with the guest artist, I administered the MLP II and FMAP. In Phase 2, results from the student surveys informed repertoire selection for the Grade 2-3 Concert and local arts festival performances. Grade 3 and 2/3 students performed in the Grade 2-3 Concert. Following the Grade 2-3 Concert, Feedback Loop #1 took place. Classes 3S and 3J performed selected concert repertoire in the local arts festival. In Phase 3, repertoire and activities were programmed based on findings from student surveys, Feedback Loop #1, and the literature review. Students in class 2/3C suggested and voted on songs they wished to sing. In Phase 4, students participated in peer interviews and Feedback Loop #2 was completed.

Phase 1 (January to mid-February)

Guest Artist Residency

A local male guest artist came to the school to do a two-week residency with students on song-writing incorporating GarageBand technology. The school under study has a tradition of hosting a guest artist each year. I try to include local artists in my programming, and this influenced my decision to invite this artist. Because he is male, I felt he would be a good role model for the students involved in the study. He was willing to work with me on developing a two-week program that incorporated song-writing, singing, and GarageBand technology. I wished to incorporate GarageBand technology because this was supported in the literature review (Maffezzoli, 2018; Mason, 2009). Planning for this residency began in August 2018.

I consulted with the guest artist about student interests. Out of this consultation, he developed the song theme for his sessions. The guest artist worked with the students to write a song about sharks and gum.

During the guest artist's residency in January and February, the students worked to collaboratively create the title and lyrics for their song, which they named "Billie-Bob Sharky". The guest artist created the melody and accompanying track for the song in GarageBand. He used student suggestions to create lyrics that fit the melody of the song. Students practiced and recorded this piece. See the lyrics to "Billie-Bob Sharky" in Figure 2 below.

Billie-Bob Sharky
<p>(Verse 1) Billie-Bob, was a shark Swimming in the ocean dark Looking for a tasty dish Gum that tasted like sunfish Every day, of the week, Billie-Bob would swim to seek Gums of red, orange and blue Rainbow gum for sharks to chew</p> <p>Chorus: Run, run, run, run, run, run fishy run Not all sharkies eat gum, bubblegum</p> <p>(Verse 2) Monday black electric eel Tuesday, mermaid, gum of teal Wednesday taste, --- of white whale Thursday, blue-y seahorse tail Friday crayfish brightly blue Saturday, puf-fer-fish too And on Sunday salmon treat Fish-gum each day of the week</p> <p>Chorus (x2)</p>

Figure 2. Lyrics to "Billie-Bob Sharky".

Our guest artist also taught the students to create their own songs using loops and voice recordings in GarageBand. Of interest were the students' reactions to their own voices when they recorded themselves in GarageBand. One participant, August, told me that GarageBand was the reason he was excited to come to music class. He said that he enjoyed recording his own voice.

Survey Findings

Surrounding the guest artist's residency, the MLP II and FMAP were administered to students. The survey findings below represent ten grade 3 boys in two sections of Grade 3 General Music and one section of Grade 2/3 General Music. Two boys were from class 2/3C, five were from class 3J, and three were from class 3S. Survey findings informed my choice of repertoire and instructional activities for the remainder of the study.

MLP II. The MLP II is divided into two sections. Findings are reported in Tables 2 through 10 below.

Table 2

Findings for Section 1, Question 1 of the MLP II

Survey Question	Response	Number of students with the same response
1. Do you have a favourite singer or band? Circle : YES NO If yes, please write the name.	No response	8
	AC/DC	1
	Bastille	1

Eight out of ten respondents were unable to articulate a favourite singer or band. This might indicate that students are still developing preferences for specific singers/bands. The MLP II Survey Reviewers commented that students might not know the name of artists or bands. Some students may have avoided answering the question as a result of this. Students may also

have been shy about sharing their answer, or not known how to spell band names. Of the two bands mentioned, the lead singers are both male.

Table 3

Findings for Section 1, Question 2 of the MLP II

Survey Question	Response	Number of students with the same response
2. Do you have a favourite song? Circle: YES NO If yes, please write the name.	No response	4
	Song by AC/DC	1
	“I Can Do Anything” [by Hedley]	1
	“Pompeii” [by Bastille] & “Immigrant Song” [by Led Zeppelin]	1
	“Centuries” [by Fall Out Boy]	1
	“Eye of the Storm” [by Ryan Stevenson]	1
	“Hall of Fame” [by The Script]	1

These responses indicate that six out of ten students are beginning to develop preferences for specific songs. Students were not asked to indicate the artist or band that performs their favourite song, so I have made educated assumptions here based on my knowledge of my students and other answers throughout each survey. In the future, the question could be adapted to ask students to write the name and artist (if known by the students).

These song titles indicate a preference for songs with a clear and audible beat, as well as a layering of sounds, as is prevalent in rock and pop music. Something to note is that artists and bands associated with these songs feature male singers.

Table 4

Findings for Section 1, Question 3 of the MLP II

Survey Question	Response	Number of students with the same response
3. If we could sing one song in music class, what song would you choose?	Songs by AC/DC	1
	Songs by Pentatonix	1
	“The Duck Song” [by Bryant Oden]	1
	“Good Old Hockey Game” [The Hockey Song” by Stompin’ Tom Connors]	1
	“Jackie Chan” [by Tiësto & Dzeko featuring Preme & Post Malone]	1
	“Centuries” [by Fall Out Boy]	1
	“Billie-Bob Sharky”	1
	“Eye of the Storm” [by Ryan Stevenson]	1
	“We Will Rock You” [by Queen]	1
	Do not know	1

Again, students were not asked to indicate the artist or band that performs their suggested song, so I have made educated assumptions based on my knowledge of my students and other answers throughout each survey. In the future, the question could be adapted to ask students to also write the name of the artist or band associated with their chosen song.

Respondent preferences for songs they would choose to sing are very diverse and span a wide variety of musical styles, including rock, a capella, folk, hip-hop, and contemporary Christian. “Billie-Bob Sharky”, the song created by classes 3J, 3S, 2/3C with our guest artist, was the chosen song indicated by one respondent. This demonstrates the influence of music being learned in music classes, as well as the student’s connection to a song that they helped to create. All of the suggested songs feature male singers in their original recordings or were first modelled to the students by a male singer.

Table 5

Findings for Section 1, Question 4 of the MLP II

Survey Question	Response	Number of students with the same response
4. Do you listen to music outside of school? Circle: YES NO Write singer/band or radio station names.	No	4
	Yes, Eagle 93.5 FM [Popular]	1
	Yes, country	1
	Yes, 95.1 FM [Contemporary Christian]	1
	Yes, 92.1 FM [Rock]	1
	Yes, I made a playlist	1
	Yes, no answer	1

Six out of ten respondents indicated diverse musical influences outside of school, including a mixture of pop, country, contemporary Christian, and rock music. Four out of ten respondents indicated that they do not listen to music outside of school. This may be the result of families not having access to recorded music. It could also be a reflection of parental preferences.

Table 6

Findings for Section 1, Question 5 of the MLP II

Survey Question	Response	Number of students with the same response
5. What musical activities do you take part in outside of school?	None	8
	Music lessons	1
	Guitar	1

Two out of ten respondents indicated taking part in musical activities outside of school. This indicates that many students' musical experiences outside of school are limited.

Table 7

Findings for Section 1, Question 6 of the MLP II

Survey Question	Response	Number of students with the same response
6. What is your favourite thing to learn about?	Gym	2
	Nothing	2
	Hockey	1
	Basketball	1
	Alligators and crocodiles	1
	Art	1
	Math	1
	Jamaica	1
	Pop music	1

Four out of ten respondents indicated a preference for learning about physical activity and sports. This reflects the literature, confirming the need and desire for many male students to be physically active. Other favourite things to learn about included animals, art, math, places around the world, and pop music. Two respondents indicated an apathy toward learning.

Table 8

Findings for Section 1, Question 7 of the MLP II

Survey Question	Response	Number of students with the same response
7. What do you enjoy reading about?	Nothing	5
	Mexico	1
	Jamaica	1
	Hockey	1
	Sports	1
	Diary of a Wimpy Kid	1

Four out of ten respondents indicated that they enjoy reading about places around the world and sports. One respondent provided a specific book title, “Diary of a Wimpy Kid”. Books in this series discuss issues with which students of this age may identify, therefore making them relevant to young male readers. This corresponds with the literature, confirming that male students learn best when they can relate their learning to things that are happening in their lives (Jones, 2014; Pineda, 2017; Power, 2008; Taylor, 2009). Five out of ten respondents demonstrated an apathy toward reading.

Table 9

Findings for Section 1, Question 8 of the MLP II

Survey Question	Response	Number of students with the same response
8. What do you like to do when you are not at school?	Play video games	3
	Play hockey	2
	Play hockey against my dad	1
	Play hockey or read	1
	Watch a Jets game	1
	iPod	1
	Listen to my playlist	1

Again, the theme of sports is prevalent, especially with hockey. Five out of ten respondents indicated that they like to take part in hockey-related activities outside of school. Five out of ten respondents indicated their preference for playing video games or utilizing other forms of technology.

Table 10

Findings for Section 2 of the MLP II

9. Country			10. Popular (Pop)		
I like it	I'm not sure	I don't like it	I like it	I'm not sure	I don't like it
6	3	1	3	3	4
11. Rock			12. Disney		
I like it	I'm not sure	I don't like it	I like it	I'm not sure	I don't like it
10	0	0	0	0	10
13. Canadian Folk			14. Canadian Indigenous		
I like it	I'm not sure	I don't like it	I like it	I'm not sure	I don't like it
4	4	2	3	4	3
15. Jazz			16. Music of Syria		
I like it	I'm not sure	I don't like it	I like it	I'm not sure	I don't like it
3	1	6	3	4	3
17. Mariachi (Mexico)			18. Music of Eritrea		
I like it	I'm not sure	I don't like it	I like it	I'm not sure	I don't like it
4	2	4	3	5	2
19. Music of the Philippines			20. What is your favourite style of music?		
I like it	I'm not sure	I don't like it	I don't have one	2	
5	4	1	Rock	2	
			Country	1	
			Rock/Country	1	
			Pop/Rock	1	
			92 City FM [Rock]	1	
			Unknown	1	
			No answer	1	

The chosen examples of country, rock, and music of the Philippines have the highest number of “I like it” responses. Research indicates that boys prefer music with a layering of sounds and a strong beat (Hall, 2005; May, 1985 as cited in Sherban, 1995), which is consistent

with their appeal to the rock and country styles, and the example of music of the Philippines. Favourite styles of music include rock, country, and pop. These are styles to which students are exposed on radio stations in South-Central Manitoba. Previous exposure to these styles likely influences their preferences here. Styles with a large amount of “I don’t like it” responses included Disney and jazz. Students in this age group have less exposure to jazz instrumentation than to the instrumentation of country and rock music. These male students may also have an aversion to Disney music with a strong female lead, as was the case in this listening example.

FMAP (Adapted MAPI). Findings are reported in Tables 11 and 12 below. Note here that one participant filled out his poll incorrectly, so his responses are not recorded. At the time the poll was administered, nine boys completed this portion correctly.

Table 11

Favorite Classroom Activities of Grade 3 Boys

Playing instruments	3
Listening to Music	2
Reading and writing music	0
Dancing	1
Singing	0
Playing music games	3

In the music program under study, *dancing* is considered to be movement to the beat of the music, often consisting of “dance moves” or “dance patterns”. *Movement activities* are less choreographed and more spontaneous. They may or may not be accompanied by music. *Music games* often include multiple components, like singing, movement, and competition or challenge. Some *music games* include dance elements, but are not labelled as *dancing*.

Three boys indicated that their favourite music classroom activity was playing instruments. I had incorporated more singing and instrument activities into music classes prior to

the commencement of the study. However, due to the study's focus on singing, more time was spent on singing the chosen repertoire than adding instrumental accompaniment. More instrument playing to accompany the songs included in the study may have helped to further engage male students, as supported in the literature review (Bowles, 1998; Broquist, 1961; Hale, 2006; Mizener, 1990; Nolin, 1973; Taylor, 2009).

Three boys indicated that their favourite music classroom activity was playing music games. Based on these results, I worked to incorporate music and singing games into music classes to engage more students in singing activities. I often used music and singing games to motivate students, using the phrase, "If we complete this singing activity, then we can play a game". This proved to be an effective strategy.

Two boys indicated a preference for listening to music and one boy preferred dancing. Music listening examples were incorporated into music classes regularly as a way to explore different styles of music and singing. Freeze Dance was a game that was incorporated into music classes regularly. It met students' need for movement, and gave students the opportunity to dance or move freely.

In the second portion of the poll (see below), another participant filled out his poll incorrectly, so eight responses are recorded here.

Table 12

Least Favourite Music Classroom Activities of Grade 3 Boys

Playing instruments	0
Listening to Music	0
Reading and writing music	3
Dancing	2
Singing	3
Playing music games	0

Three boys indicated that reading and writing music was their least favourite music classroom activity. In the school under study, reading music is understood to mean reading rhythm and melody patterns on the whiteboard or flashcards. Writing music is understood to mean notating patterns on paper or with manipulatives. Reading and writing music are outcomes in the Manitoba Music Curriculum and essential to the development of musicianship. To honor these findings, short periods of time near the beginning of a lesson were used for music reading and writing and were followed by more preferred activities.

Three boys indicated that singing was their least favourite activity. Throughout the study, I worked to utilize strategies intended to make singing more fun and engaging. Two boys indicated that dancing was their least favourite classroom activity. Age appropriate folk dances were introduced periodically throughout the school year, but were not a focus of grade 3 music programming. When dance moves were taught to accompany a song, as in “Ama Lama” or “Hullamackadoo”, I tried to ensure that the combination of movement and lyrics were not too challenging. I perceived that an adequate amount of challenge in the lyrics and accompanying movement patterns helped to make the dance moves more fun and engaging for the students.

Upon interpreting the findings from the FMAP, I realized that a number of changes should be made to its design and administration if it is to be used in the future. An additional category for movement activities should be added, as movement activities can vary greatly from dancing. The poll indicated that a number of boys disliked dancing, while throughout the study they demonstrated a strong engagement in movement activities. Adding this movement category would help to clarify the findings. An additional category for performing could be added to keep the poll consistent with the original MAPI. To clarify activity categories for students, a short explanation of each category could be given by the researcher prior to the administration of the

survey. Due to time constraints on the study, there was no time available to determine the FMAP's practicability for students of this age. The number of polls that were completed incorrectly indicates that more pre-teaching would be required to help all students complete this poll correctly.

Phase 2 (mid-February to mid-April)

Results from the student surveys from Phase 1 informed repertoire selection for the Grade 2-3 Concert and local arts festival performances. Based on the guest artist's topic of sharks and gum, I chose the theme of imagination for the concert. Using this theme and working to incorporate student preferences and interests proved to be a challenging task. This was also made challenging by the lack of practice time available due to numerous snow days and school cancellations. I felt the need to choose repertoire that students would be able to learn and perform successfully in a short period of time.

I polled classes 3S and 3J to help decide between two songs I had chosen. These songs were chosen because I thought they would be manageable within the timeframe and fit into the theme of imagination. The songs were not chosen based on student survey responses, but the element of humour supported in the literature review (Hall, 2005; Neu & Weinfeld, 2007) was prevalent in both songs. The students were asked to vote between "Say What?" and "Oompa-Loompa Doompadee-Doo" (from *Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory*). The students' initial reaction to the song "Say What?" was one of disbelief and laughter because of the strange and unexpected word combinations. The students who voted against it thought that it sounded too difficult to learn. The majority of students voted for "Say What?", so we proceeded with learning this song. It became many students' favourite song to sing, as reflected in the peer interviews at

the end of the study. This was an example of including students in the repertoire selection process.

Grade 2-3 Concert Repertoire

Due to time constraints on concert preparation, I chose to program a number of familiar songs learned earlier in the school year. Songs were taught using strategies from the literature review selected to help engage male students. Below are the songs that were featured in the concert:

1. **“Imagination Train”** (Wuytack, 1970). This song was chosen to teach round singing and provide single-sex singing opportunities. Providing single-sex singing opportunities and incorporating actions were the strategies chosen to engage male singers. I translated the song “Le Train” into English. The actions in Figure 3 below were incorporated into the different sections of the song and created visual interest when the song was performed as a round.

Clickety, clickety clack- students snapped their fingers three times

The train runs down the track- students moved their arms like they were running

Oo-ee oo-ee oo- students pulled down the chain for an imaginary train whistle twice

Chooka-chooka chooka-chooka chooka-chooka choo- students moved their arms simultaneously in circles at their sides to imitate a moving train

Figure 3. Lyrics and Actions for “Imagination Train”.

2. **“Imaginary Train Ride”** (Classes 3S, 3J, & 2/3C in collaboration with Mrs. Spraggs). Each class was divided into small groups to write their own verse to the familiar tune of “Burn Little Candles” (Kriske & DeLelles, 2007). This task was presented as a competition. I chose a winning verse from each class to be featured in the concert. The selected verses contained four completed lines of text, were grammatically correct, rhymed, and featured

lyrics that matched the rhythm of the words. Presenting the task as a competition was a strategy used to help engage male singers, as well as providing the opportunity for students to perform verses they had created.

This song was performed by all three classes and included Orff instruments (contrabass bars, bass xylophones, alto xylophones), percussion instruments (temple blocks, bongos), a train whistle, and piano accompaniment arranged by the researcher. It was performed as a rondo, with the A Section being the song “Train Ride” (Birkenshaw-Fleming, 1997), and the selected student verses forming the B, C, and D Sections. Each class performed their own selected verse. “Train Ride” was a song that all grade 3 and 2/3 students had learned earlier in the year.

3. **“Say What?”** (Jennings, 2007). This song was selected and performed by classes 3S and 3J. Giving these students the opportunity to choose between two presented songs was the strategy used to help engage male singers. As their learning process often took more time, class 2/3C did not learn this song for the concert. Following the concert, class 2/3C asked if they could also learn to sing this song.
4. **“Billie-Bob Sharky”** (Classes 3S, 3J, & 2/3C with our guest artist). Students had not yet had the opportunity to sing this song for the student body. It was performed with the backing track our guest artist created using GarageBand. Utilizing technology and performing a song that students helped to create were the strategies chosen to help engage male singers. This was the only song that used technology in the concert.
5. **“Believe”** (Mendes, Terefe, Scott, & Warburton, 2015). This song, featured in the Disney movie *Descendants* and performed by Canadian artist Shawn Mendes, directly related to the theme of imagination. I also chose this song because of student preferences for current

music. Students had learned about Shawn Mendes as a featured composer previously in music class, helping them to identify with the composer and performer of this piece. My original intent had been to accompany this song on guitar, as performed by Shawn Mendes, but time constraints led to the song being performed with a piano accompanist. This song was performed by all grade 2 and 3 students as the finale for their concert.

Feedback Loop #1

Feedback Loops in this study were developed as a part of the action research cycle. Questions asked in these sessions developed out of student responses to selected interventions and activities. I used the observations and reflections in my journal to formulate the questions. Feedback Loop #1 focused on the preparation and performance of concert materials. This feedback loop took place within the context of music class and included all students in the grades under study. Comments from study participants were transcribed and recorded as data in the findings below. See the questions from Feedback Loop #1 in Figure 4.

1. What are some of the things that made practicing for the concert fun?
2. What was your favourite concert song and why?
 Imagination Train
 Imaginary Train Ride
 Say What?
 Billy-Bob Sharky
 Believe
3. Tell me about singing two songs that you helped to write.
4. It seemed to me that most students were really excited to sing “Believe” by Shawn Mendes. What made this so exciting?
5. What do you think would make singing even more fun? Movement? Silly Songs?

Figure 4. Questions from Feedback Loop #1.

In this Feedback Loop, students were asked what made practicing for the concert fun. Reflecting on how this was worded, I realize that it may have been presented as a leading question. I should have also asked students what was not fun about practicing for the concert. Participants responded that they enjoyed practicing “fun and funky” words, as well as creating their own verse for “Imaginary Train Ride”.

Participants in classes 3S and 3J shared that “Say What?” was one of their favourite performance songs because of its “weird and funny” words. The words made it feel like a tongue twister. It kept the audience guessing and the combinations of words made the song funny. See an excerpt from the song lyrics in Figure 5 below:

Papa papa moonbeam	Sneaker beaker elbow
Milkshake jellyroll	Oboe rock and roll
Toe town fall down	Toe town fall down
Pick a pepper hog	Eenie meenie blog

Figure 5. Excerpt from Lyrics of “Say What?”

“Say What?” featured two speech solos. During the feedback loop, participants explained that they looked forward to hearing the speech solos. In the performance, one selected male student from class 3J performed speech solo #1, shouting out the name “Winnipeg” in the middle of the verse. Another selected female student from class 3S performed speech solo #2, shouting out the word “jitterbug” in the middle of the verse. Students looked forward to these solos because the words were funny and random. Winnipeg is also a local city, which makes solo #1 even funnier because it is unexpected in the midst of all the other random words. I observed large smiles on many students’ faces following these speech solos.

During this feedback loop, students also expressed that they enjoyed the challenge of learning “Say What?”. Kristopher articulated that the song was challenging, but not too

challenging. I was intrigued by the close relationship of this comment to Csikszentmihalyi's *Flow Theory* (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). Kristopher was able to articulate, in a child's words, the optimal flow experience required for engagement. Csikszentmihalyi articulates that challenges "are necessary to provide enjoyment" (p. 50). Freer (2009) describes flow experiences by writing, "The quality most highly associated with flow is a sense that one's skills are equal to the challenges being presented" (p. 144). Hallam (2010) further explains, "If the task is too easy the person becomes bored. If the work demands skills beyond the capabilities of the individual, anxiety is created" (p. 228). Therefore, the task must present the right amount of challenge for students to experience *optimal flow* or engagement (Csikszentmihalyi, p. 74). The song "Say What?" provided the right amount of challenge for the students.

Regarding songs that students helped to write, participants commented that they had fun putting together their ideas and using their imaginations. Walter and Jacob did not share these opinions, articulating that "Billie-Bob Sharky" was "cheesy" and not serious enough. This view was not shared by all students, as was indicated in the MLPII and Peer Interviews. This finding revealed to me that some information in the literature review does not apply to every male student. Not all male students like singing silly songs or songs with lyrics that use the imagination. Some male students prefer singing serious songs. Becoming familiar with your students and their likes and dislikes regarding repertoire is important. Asking for students' thoughts and opinions when introducing silly songs can help the teacher to continue to teach songs that appeal to students, or discontinue teaching songs that do not appeal to students. This comment also reveals that it is difficult to find repertoire that appeals to every single student in a class. In response to these comments, I decided not to teach certain songs that I had chosen to

program initially, such as “Elephants Have Wrinkles” (Gagné, 2000), as I felt students may perceive them as “cheesy” and disengage from the material.

This feedback loop also revealed that students in all three classes really enjoyed singing “Believe” by Shawn Mendes. Many students said it was their favourite song to sing in the concert and described the song as “fun”. Participants described it as a “good song”. They liked the song because it was an “actual song” and a “common song”. Walter stated that he liked it because it was more serious than “Billie-Bob Sharky”. Participants also appreciated that the song had a “good beat”.

Suggestions that emerged out of Feedback Loop #1 were the use of movement and silly words during singing activities. Walter requested the opportunity to suggest and vote on songs. Xavier expressed the desire to sing about gross things like “mouldy teeth” or bodily functions. Students also suggested playing more singing games.

Local Arts Festival Repertoire

Below are the songs that were performed at the local arts festival by classes 3S and 3J. The local arts festival is a non-competitive festival held in the same community as the school. The festival was held throughout the month of April, with the Grade 3 School Classroom Choir performing on April 12, 2019. These two groups sang in the Grade 3 School Classroom Choir category. Both classes sang together to create a large choir. As they were already performing poetry in the festival with their classroom teacher, class 2/3C did not sing in the Grade 3 School Classroom Choir.

1. **“Le Train”** (Wuytack, 1970). For the performance of this song at the local arts festival, the students learned to sing the round in French. Students were provided with single-sex singing opportunities during rehearsals. To ensure competence and confidence in their performance,

they did not perform in single-sex groups. Instead, strong singers were placed strategically in each part across the choir. Again, actions were incorporated into the performance of this song.

2. **“Say What?”** (Jennings, 2007). For this performance, the clapping patterns suggested in the music were added to provide the students with a further challenge.

As a result of this performance opportunity, I learned that if music is engaging, students will be happy to practice and prepare it for multiple performances. Students were excited to have the opportunity to perform “Say What?” one more time. Adding additional elements to the performance of the repertoire (a different language, hand claps) helped to keep the rehearsals engaging for the students. Incorporating different ways to practice, such as providing single-sex singing opportunities, also made practicing engaging for the students.

Phase 3 (mid-April to June)

In this phase, repertoire and activities were selected based on feedback loops and student surveys, as well as information in the literature review. I chose to teach repertoire and activities from the list in Table 13 below, as time allowed. A more detailed list with descriptions and rationales for song selection can be found in Appendix T. Rationales for song selection were not shared with students. Upon further reflection, I realize that sharing rationales with students might have been a good opportunity to allow them to share in the research process. However, I did not think to do this at the time as I had not planned this in my methodology. Not knowing who would be a participant in the study until the end of June, I did not make specific notes on which students were engaged in the activities mentioned below. When I write about students in Appendix T, I write about the classes as whole groups.

Table 13

List of Selected Repertoire and Interventions

Song/Activity Title	Source	Interventions Used When Teaching Repertoire
1. “Letters and Shapes”	Kriske & DeLelles, 2007	Movement, competition, creativity
2. “Oh When the Saints”	Kriske & DeLelles, 2007	Movement, competition, play
3. “Bump Up Tomato”	Traditional American camp song	Movement, play, humour
4. “Billy”	Brummitt & Choksy, 1987	Movement, creativity, play, humour
5. “Captain Don’t Side Track Your Train”	Kriske & DeLelles, 2007	Instruments
6. “Ama Lama”	Kriske & DeLelles, 2007	Movement, appealing text
7. “My Aunt Came Back”	Kriske & DeLelles, 2006	Movement, humour
8. “Tony Chestnut”	Thompson, 2019	Movement, humour, appealing text
9. “Rattlesnake”	Choksy, 1999	Appealing text, student interests
10. “Rattlesnake Skipping Song”	Sills, 1995	Single sex singing opportunities, appealing text, movement, creativity, rhythmic speech, student interests
11. “Sweetly Sings the Donkey”	Barron, 1993	Humour, single-sex singing opportunities
12. “Tingalayo”	Cavoukian, 1995	Varied instrumental accompaniment
13. “Hullamackadoo”	Geoghegan, 2017	Appealing text, varied instrumental accompaniment
14. “Play Ball”	Donnelly & Strid, 2013	Student interests
15. “I’m a Bone-Legged Chicken”	Brumfield, 2006	Humour, student interests, movement, creativity
16. “Once an Austrian Went Yodelling”	Kriske & DeLelles, 2007	Humour, student interests, movement

Student Suggestions and Voting in Class 2/3C

During Feedback Loop #1, Walter proposed the opportunity for students to suggest song ideas and have the class vote on them. In response to this request, students from class 2/3C were invited to suggest school-appropriate songs that they had not yet learned in music class. Out of the primary list of suggestions, I selected a number of songs for voting in two categories—silly songs and serious songs. In the silly song category, the following songs were presented: “Spaghetti Cat” by Parry Gripp¹, “It’s Raining Tacos” by Parry Gripp², and “Yum Yum Breakfast Burrito” by Parry Gripp³. The majority of students voted for “Spaghetti Cat”. In the serious song category, the following songs were presented: “The Hockey Song” by Stompin’ Tom Connors⁴ and “All Star” by Smashmouth⁵. The majority of students voted for “The Hockey Song”.

After hearing classes 3S and 3J sing “Say What?” at the Grade 2-3 Concert, class 2/3C asked to sing it as well, expressing that the song was funny, used random words, and had a good beat. Its bluesy rock accompaniment may have also contributed to their request, reflecting student preferences for rock music as indicated in the MLP II. At the end of each successful lesson, students would sing “Spaghetti Cat”, “Say What?”, or “The Hockey Song”. This was a time that students anticipated with excitement. They were actively engaged in singing during these portions of the lesson. This singing time was a strong motivator for positive behaviour throughout the lesson and allowed students the opportunity to sing for the enjoyment of singing.

¹ In reference list under screen name jetgab.

² In reference list under screen name ItzYYG.

³ In reference lists under screen name ParryGripp.

⁴ In reference list under screen name drouid4.

⁵ In reference list under screen name FourLyrics.

Phase 4 (June)

Peer Interviews

Peer interviews took place within the context of regular music classes. With input from homeroom teachers, students were assigned partners and interviewed one another. The responses of ten grade 3 boys are highlighted in Tables 14-21 below.

Table 14

Responses to Peer Interview Question #1

Question	Response	Number of students who provided this response
1. Tell me about a time when you most enjoyed singing this school year.	I don't know	3
	Singing at the concert	2
	Making my own song	1
	When we sang "Say What?"	1
	Singing at the festival	1
	When we sang "Billie-Bob Sharky"	1
	No answer	1

Six out of ten respondents provided descriptive information, while four respondents did not. Three participants indicated enjoying singing during performances (Grade 2-3 Concert and local arts festival). The songs "Say What?" and "Billie-Bob Sharky" were also listed as most enjoyable experiences, both of which were included in the Grade 2-3 Concert. One respondent enjoyed making his own song.

Table 15

Responses to Peer Interview Question #2

Question	Response	Number of students who provided this response
2. What activities helped you to be engaged in singing this school year?	Making my own song	1
	Singing funny songs	1
	Singing “Say What?”	1
	Singing at the festival	1
	Singing at the concert	1
	Singing “Believe”	1
	Playing instruments	1
	Rap, rock, soul	1
	Rap, country, rock	1
	I don’t know	1

Nine out of ten respondents provided descriptive information, while one respondent did not. Two respondents detailed styles of music, some of which were not featured in programming throughout the study. These participants likely misinterpreted the question. However, the inclusion of the rock style in their answers is significant to this study as it corroborates male students’ preference for rock music as revealed in the MLP II. A wide variety of interventions were represented in these responses, including: creativity, humour, playing instruments, singing “Believe” and “Say What?”, and performing at the Grade 2-3 Concert and local arts festival.

Table 16

Responses to Peer Interview Question #3

Question	Response	Number of students who provided this response
3. Your teacher worked to pick songs based on student interests (like animals and sports). How did singing about student interests make you feel?	Ok	1
	Good	1
	Very good	1
	Take Me Out to the Ball Game	1
	Actions	1
	Better	1
	No answer	1
	Don't know	1
	Nothing	1
	Mad	1

Four out of ten responses to singing about student interests were positive, while one response was negative. Three respondents did not provide descriptive information. Two respondents misinterpreted the question, relaying a song title and movement intervention. These answers are important, however, because they detail significant learning experiences. “Take Me Out to the Ball Game” was a memorable song for one of the respondents. Another respondent indicated that actions during songs were meaningful. I have assumed that these student responses are positive reactions to the interventions.

Table 17

Responses to Peer Interview Question #4

Question	Response	Number of students who provided this response
4. Tell me what you learned about your singing voice this year. How does this new information make you feel about singing?	Nothing, good	2
	A lot, yes	1
	That it changes as you get older, normal	1
	My voice has changed, good	1
	Good, feris!!	1
	My singing voice is me taking height, how I used to feel	1
	Not much, it does nothing to me	1
	Not much, ok	1
	No answer, not too good	1

Five respondents indicated minimal learning about the singing voice this year. Only three respondents provided descriptive information. One student articulated that he learned about his voice changing as he gets older. Another student stated that his voice had changed. I assumed that this was a misinterpretation of the class discussions about the voice change as all male study participants continued to speak in treble ranges through the completion of the study. No boys had experienced the voice change as described in class discussions. One response indicated that a student had learned a lot about his singing voice this year. This may indicate increased competence in singing abilities through learning to sing using a psychomotor approach. Of note are the multiple responses that indicated students were apathetic toward learning about their singing voices.

One respondent indicated a misinterpretation of the first part of the question, “Tell me what you learned about your singing voice this year”. The answer “good” is not related to the question and does not provide descriptive information. Two respondents indicated a

misinterpretation of the second part of the question, “How does this new information make you feel?” The responses, “yes” and “feris!!” were not related to the question and did not provide descriptive information. I did not have the opportunity to clarify the meaning of the word “feris” prior to the completion of the study.

Table 18

Responses to Peer Interview Question #5

Question	Response	Number of students who provided this response
5. Do you feel your singing has gotten better since the beginning of the school year? Circle: Yes / No Why or why not?	Yes, because	2
	No, I don't know	2
	Yes, practice	1
	Yes, I don't know	1
	Yes, I only sang once	1
	Yes, because singing is useless unless you want to be a singer	1
	No, I don't sing loud	1
	No answer	1

Five out of ten respondents indicated feeling that their singing had improved since the beginning of the school year, with a significant justification being improvement as a result of practice. Three respondents indicated feeling that their singing voices had not improved. One respondent provided no information.

Two student responses to the second part of the question described a feeling of inadequacy when it comes to singing abilities, saying that they did not sing frequently or loudly. This indicates that more work can be done to increase the confidence and competence of the male singers who participated in this study.

“Singing is useless unless you want to be a singer” is a response that garners attention. This indicates a viewpoint influenced by outside sources. While I am aware this is a view held by

some people, this is not the viewpoint that I expressed in music classes. Throughout the study, singing was described as a tool for learning musical skills and expressing emotions. It was also presented as a way to learn about the cultures of people around the world. I hope that students will leave the music program understanding that singing is a skill that all people can use for enjoyment. It is also a functional skill that people can use to help them complete tasks and remember facts.

I was quite surprised by this comment because I never heard this viewpoint being expressed in music classes by students. Perhaps the purposes of singing were not a large enough focus throughout the study, so I plan to discuss this more thoroughly with students in the future. I hope that students leaving the music program will see the value of singing, even if they do not wish to become singers.

Table 19

Responses to Peer Interview Question #6

Question	Response	Number of students who provided this response
6. Describe what it feels like to sing with instruments.	Good	4
	It feels the same	1
	Very good	1
	Very awesome	1
	No answer	1
	Great	1
	Good, cool	1
With which instrument do you prefer to sing?	Guitar	3
	Drums	2
	Piano	2
	Ukulele	1
	No accompaniment	1
	No Answer	1

Eight out of ten participants indicated positive responses to singing with instrumental accompaniment. One respondent indicated that singing with instruments feels the same as singing without them, while one respondent provided no information. Participants indicated a preference for singing with guitar, drums, and piano.

Table 20

Responses to Peer Interview Question #7

Question	Response	Number of students who provided this response
7. Which picture most inspires you to sing? (Boy/Girl)	Boy	8
	Both	1
	No answer	1
	Girl	0

Eight out of ten respondents indicated that the picture of the boy most inspires them to sing. One respondent indicated that both photos inspire him to sing. No respondents indicated that the picture of the girl inspires them to sing.

Table 21

Responses to Peer Interview Question #8

Question	Response	Number of students who provided this response
8. Do you feel that singing is an activity for boys and girls? Circle: Yes / No Why or why not?	Yes, because every person can sing	3
	Yes, because a lot of boys and girls are professional singers	1
	Yes, talk into the mic and sing	1
	Yes, because both boys and girls can sing	1
	Yes, unknown	1
	Yes, music can be fun	1
	No answer	1
	No, it's only for girls	1

Eight out of ten respondents indicated the perception that singing is an activity for boys and girls, which reflects the viewpoint that I supported and discussed throughout the study. One respondent provided no information. Another respondent indicated the perception that singing is only for girls. This is not reflective of the music programming or the values held by the researcher and indicates a viewpoint influenced by outside sources.

Feedback Loop #2

In Feedback Loop #2, students were asked for their opinions on completing the MLPPII again in the fall to help me choose repertoire that relates to their interests. Students were reminded that many of them recorded positive responses to being able to sing about their interests. Many students from class 3S answered that they would like to do this again. The suggestion was made to do a verbal poll rather than a long writing activity. Many students in class 3J were open to completing a similar survey again. Grade three male participants in class 2/3C expressed that they did not wish to repeat the survey, explaining that their interests would not change over the summer.

Students were also asked if they had further ideas about how to engage grade 3 students in singing. William suggested games before and after singing activities. Other suggestions were: more games, more singing games, singing with instruments, and more actions to go along with songs. Again, Walter suggested giving students the opportunity to pick songs.

Journal Analysis

Through journaling, I sought to answer the guiding questions below:

1. What engagement strategies (musical repertoire, interest topics, psychomotor approach, male role models) were incorporated into lessons and how?
2. What did you notice about the reactions and participation of students?

3. Did engagement change? How do you know?
4. How did students react to the accompanying instrument when singing?
5. Moving forward, what changes will you make to your practice?

Answers to these questions are reflected in the sections below. Reflections on how specific activities led to student engagement, as recorded in my journal, can also be found earlier in this chapter when Grade 2-3 Concert repertoire is discussed (p. 119-121), as well as in Appendix T (Chosen Repertoire, Descriptions, and Justifications).

Student Reactions and Preferences

In my journal, I reflected on student reactions to planned and unplanned interventions. Interventions to which students responded positively were: the layering of sounds and a strong percussive pulse, single-sex singing opportunities, and male guest artists and singers. Students often made positive comments about these interventions, calling them “cool” or stating how much they enjoyed themselves. Students demonstrated that they were engaged, according to our class definition of an engaged singer, when these interventions were used.

Following singing activities where students sang with multiple accompanying instruments, I polled them about their preferred instrument and recorded these numbers in my journal. These findings were consistent with the findings in peer interviews. Many students preferred singing with guitar and piano. I also discussed in detail students’ reactions to the chosen repertoire and activities. These reactions are recorded in the descriptions of selected repertoire in Appendix T.

Reflections on Class Discussions

When journaling, I often reflected on class discussions. Many of the students’ perspectives from these discussions were additional to the perspectives presented during

feedback loops. Reflections on discussions about male and female voices were prevalent.

Whenever I would expose the students to a vocal model, either live or recorded, we would talk about the tone and range of the voice(s) that they heard. These discussions led many students to understand that singing is appropriate for males and females, as reflected in the majority of participant responses to Peer Interview Question #8. I reflected in detail upon student reactions to different singing examples and the vocal pedagogy strategies used in class.

A thought that came out of class discussions was as follows: “Some students revealed that they had never heard their father sing. What if I am their only vocal model?” I did not end up asking this question to the students. Instead, to provide students with a broader base of vocal models, I worked to expose students to various male singers (both live and recorded) throughout the course of the study.

Themes

In my research journal, I drew attention to themes that positively impacted student engagement. In my analysis, I made a list of these themes and how often they were discussed in the journal. Recurring themes that were discussed three or more times are recorded below:

1. The effectiveness of singing about student interests;
2. The high value students placed on songs with a strong beat;
3. The importance of current music;
4. The impact of male singing guests and vocal models.

These major themes were triangulated with findings from other data sources and informed recommendations for further practice.

Re-Envisioning of Pedagogy

Throughout the journal writing process, I made suggestions for strategies to use in future years to engage male students in singing. Some strategies had been shown to be effective throughout the study and therefore could be used again to achieve similar results. Some suggestions came out of student responses to interventions, as well as suggestions from my critical friend.

The following list features ideas for future pedagogy as recorded in the journal according to intervention type:

Beat

- using rock music to accompany beat-keeping activities (used successfully within the study);
- using a track with a strong beat to accompany rhythm reading activities;
- programming more upbeat choral pieces with a strong or “sick” beat [a beat that adds rhythmic interest or texture to a piece of music];

Creativity

- incorporating class creative projects using iPads (used successfully within the study);
- writing a song specifically for students;
- incorporating student viewpoints and suggestions for musical accompaniment (used successfully within the study);

Ways to use the Voice

- incorporating rap into songs;
- incorporating rhythmic speech into songs (used successfully in the study);

Competition

- utilizing competitive games to teach round singing (used successfully in the study, see more details in Appendix T);

Seeing Oneself in the Music

- incorporating songs that represent different female and male roles (for example, pairing “Hullamackadoo” with a coal miner’s song or sailor song);
- relate songs to events happening in the world;

Developing Appreciation of One’s Own Voice

- incorporating singing games that include individual singing opportunities;
- recording one’s own voice;
- recording the class as they sing (used successfully within the study).

Many student perspectives were recorded in my journal as they came up throughout the school day. For example, August told me (outside of music class) that he was excited to create songs in GarageBand because he got to record his own voice. The following paragraph is an excerpt from my journal,

He has mentioned that he is getting more used to singing, but he is quite self-conscious about singing alone. I am wondering if there is something about getting used to the sound of one’s voice that is significant here. The audio recorder [in GarageBand] allows students to hear what their voice sounds like outside their head. They can’t hear this when they sing in a group.

This reflection helped to inspire an idea for future research and ideas for projects in the following school year. To build competence and confidence in singing and get students used to the sound of their own voice, I recommended the use of GarageBand to record and edit students’ voices. I also suggested incorporating more individual singing in small groups as students grow older.

Research Timeline

The research journal provided a place for me to present ideas for modification to the project timeline. Through these reflections, I made the decision to adapt the MAPI due to time constraints placed on the study by snow days.

I used my journal as a way of staying on track and carrying out the project in a way that was consistent with the project timeline. A section at the end of each entry was called *Next Steps*. Some of these next steps grew out of issues that arose over the course of the study, like the necessity of raising the key of “Billie-Bob Sharky” to allow students to sing with more energy higher in their range. Some next steps developed from the action research cycle as responses to interventions. Questions for feedback loops and song ideas arising from the action research cycle were also recorded as next steps for the following parts of the study.

Critical Friend Meetings

I met with my critical friend, an experienced male music teacher from outside of my school division, twice over the course of the study. We met once in March and once in May. Our first meeting was approximately two hours and our second meeting was one hour long. We discussed the research questions and what strategies I had tried thus far. My critical friend helped me to examine my interpretations of the data from his perspective and offered some differing interpretations. He made suggestions for alternate interpretations and future interventions. He provided valuable feedback about my chosen strategies and offered suggestions for extension activities. We discussed ideas for new activities, as well as how these activities may affect the learning of male and female students.

Themes

Significant themes emerged out of our conversations. In my notes and reflections on our two meetings, I noted the eight themes below. Much importance was placed on the following:

- choosing repertoire that relates to student interests and experiences;
- providing context for songs and musical styles in order to engage students;
- providing musical examples that demonstrate both genders singing;
- being an expressive and enthusiastic leader who is passionate about the arts;
- utilizing humour to engage students;
- utilizing imagery to teach students about the physiology of singing;
- utilizing songs with a clear and audible beat (such as songs within the rock style);
- presenting song options from which students can choose.

Value of Peer Feedback

I found meetings with my critical friend to be a valuable part of the research process. My critical friend helped me to uncover some of my assumptions about teaching students to sing. I assumed that teaching singing using a psychomotor approach and showing students visuals of what happens in the body would be helpful. My critical friend recommended that I use imagery and analogies instead, explaining that they are often easier for young children to understand. Following the sessions with my critical friend, I worked to incorporate more imagery into my teaching, and my students responded appropriately. For example, when I asked students to stand rooted like a tree, their posture improved. When I asked them to fill up with air like they were filling up a tire around their waists, they breathed lower in the body. I found that using imagery was an effective intervention when teaching my students to sing successfully.

I had assumed that having boys compete against girls during singing activities may be more hurtful than helpful, but my critical friend reassured me that this would help to promote singing if it was used in musically appropriate ways. I used this strategy through single-sex singing opportunities numerous times when teaching repertoire throughout the study, and it motivated boys to sing. It may have been more motivational for boys, as I noticed their increase in volume as well as increased camaraderie. The girls did not sing louder when asked to sing their own part. They did appear, however, very happy to be singing in a group with only girls. Meeting with my critical friend was a valuable part of the research process because his alternate perspectives helped me to approach the research questions in new ways, especially relating to teaching singing using a psychomotor approach.

Findings from Programming Interventions

The findings below were supported through triangulation across numerous data sources, including feedback loops with my students (where students had the opportunity to comment on my interpretations of the data), my journal, and peer interviews.

Student Interests and Preferences

As detailed previously, performance materials and pedagogical repertoire were chosen to incorporate student interests, including sports (“The Hockey Song”, “Play Ball”) and animals (“Rattlesnake”, “Rattlesnake Skipping Song”, “Say What?”, “Sweetly Sings the Donkey”, “Tingalayo”). Students also showed an interest in places around the world. They were engaged in singing songs from Canada (“Rattlesnake Skipping Song”, “Believe”), the Caribbean (“Tingalayo”), Austria (“Once an Austrian Went Yodelling”), and Scotland (“I’m a Bone-Legged Chicken”). Five male participants indicated positive responses to singing about student

interests in their peer interviews. Students were not as engaged in songs that did not directly relate to their interests, including “Hullamackadoo” and “Captain Don’t Side Track Your Train”.

Student Input in Repertoire Selection

Prior to the Grade 2-3 Concert, I included students in the selection of repertoire for the upcoming performance. Students in classes 3S and 3J reacted positively to making collaborative decisions about repertoire. Students voted for the song “Say What? “, which ended up being a favourite performance song for many students. Students were actively engaged in learning and performing this song.

In Phase 3 and again in Phase 4 of the study, Walter proposed giving students the opportunity to suggest and vote on songs that they would like to sing. Based on this suggestion, students in class 2/3C were given the opportunity to suggest songs. I came up with a short list of selected songs that were school appropriate. Students voted on songs in two categories- silly songs and serious songs. Often at the end of the music period, I gave 2/3C the opportunity to sing one of their selected songs or the song “Say What?” This class looked forward to this time at the end of their lessons and were engaged in singing the songs that they had selected.

Movement

Movement interventions have been detailed in the repertoire list above. Another added movement component was the use of *jitter sticks*. *Jitter sticks* are popsicle sticks in a glass, with each stick suggesting a different type of movement. I gained this idea early in my teaching career at a Manitoba Orff Chapter Make’N’Take. When I noticed that the students required a movement break during the teaching of a song, students would be invited to choose a *jitter stick*. Students would get up out of their seats to complete these movement tasks. When they returned to their seats, they were often ready to engage in singing again.

“Freeze Dance” was used as a movement opportunity at the end of a successful lesson. In this activity, students moved to music and when it stopped, they had to become very still. If they were seen moving by the designated *spotters* (classmates), they were out and became a *spotter*. Whoever stayed on the dance floor the longest won the game. The winner of the game was celebrated by their classmates through a round of applause.

Working toward a game of “Freeze Dance” was a strong motivator for positive participation throughout music lessons, as it was a game that students requested repeatedly. This is an activity in which any style of music can be used and was an opportunity for me to incorporate preferred musical styles that students had indicated on their MLPPII surveys.

I found that movement was an effective way to engage students in singing activities. The students’ desire to move during singing activities was one of the themes that was discussed repeatedly in feedback loops and class discussions.

Humour

In speaking with students, they requested singing silly (but not “cheesy”) songs. Walter and Jacob expressed that “Billie-Bob Sharky” was cheesy because of the lyrics. These students disliked songs that they perceived to be babyish. The slow tempo of the piece, combined with the animals being described as sharkies and fishies may have had something to do with this perception. It may have been perceived as too sweet to be silly. Many students would describe silly songs as songs that made them laugh. While “Billie-Bob Sharky” contains humorous elements, it is not a song that made audiences or singers laugh.

Contrary to the previous response, multiple students indicated that “Billie-Bob Sharky” was their favourite song to sing. Students enjoyed the funny and unexpected elements in the

song. There was also the fictional component that engaged the imagination of students and made it fun. The song spoke of sharks eating fish-flavoured gum, which does not happen in real life.

Other songs that incorporated humour were: “I’m a Bone-Legged Chicken”, “Once an Austrian Went Yodelling”, “Sweetly Sings the Donkey”, “Bump Up Tomato”, “Say What?”, “My Aunt Came Back”, and “Spaghetti Cat”. Students loved “I’m a Bone-Legged Chicken” because they got to belch in the song. The belching was unexpected at first, since these sounds are often something students are asked to refrain from doing voluntarily. In “Once an Austrian Went Yodelling”, students found the parts about the milk maid and jersey cow to be funny and unexpected. They got to make milking sounds for the jersey cow and kissing noises for the milk maid. Students found the idea of a donkey singing in “Sweetly Sings the Donkey” to be humorous. Trying to make their classmates smile in “Bump Up Tomato” also added a humorous element to that day’s activities.

Humorous songs put smiles on the faces of the students and helped them to engage in singing activities. These were the songs that students asked to sing repeatedly. In his peer interview, James noted that singing funny songs helped him to engage in singing.

Psychomotor Approach

Breathing. In February 2019, I showed two videos that demonstrated what happens in the body during breathing. These videos were animations that simulated the inhalation and exhalation of breath into the body. One focused on the lungs (Medical Lab Technology-MLT, 2016) and the other on the diaphragm (2D & 3D Animation and Explainer Videos, 2012). I talked about the diaphragm and how to breathe in a way that supports the voice.

A number of students in classes 3S and 3J inhaled and exhaled along with the videos. Kristopher found the videos quite fascinating and commented on how the diaphragm is similar to

a piston in a car. Some students in class 2/3C found the videos to be gross or disturbing. Walter told me that these videos were for grade 7 students. Some student reactions made me wonder if this group of students was ready to learn about human physiology.

Following these lessons, I focused on using analogies and imagery to get students' bodies engaged in breathing. This was suggested by my critical friend, who had used the analogy of belly button power to get students to breathe low in the body. I used the analogy of filling up a tire of air around the middle of the body when students inhaled. I also used a breathing ball as a visual reference to demonstrate expansion in the body upon inhalation.

I used the analogy of being rooted like a tree to encourage a grounded singing stance. Teaching about the physiology of the breath and using these analogies helped students to gain a better understanding of the posture required for good breath support. They were able to demonstrate a stance that indicated engagement in singing. They knew how an engaged body was supposed to look and were able to emulate that stance. For many students, this increased their body's engagement in the singing process.

Energy. Prior to the Grade 2-3 Concert, we talked about the importance of the breath in creating an energetic sound. We also talked about the importance of facial expression in creating an energetic sound. We practiced singing with different facial expressions to hear the different tones that can be created. Students discovered that singing with "smiling eyes" was an effective way to produce an energetic tone. Through this exercise, students learned to engage their faces in the singing process. We did not talk extensively about how sound resonates in the body, but rather how altering the shape of the face can change the sound that is produced. In my journal, I recorded the following observation,

When [class] 3S sang to me on the Monday after Spring Break, they sounded tired. I asked how they could make their sound energetic. I was impressed that they explained the need for a good breath and expression with the eyes. Way to go class!

This observation indicates that students understood how to create an energetic sound with their bodies. Many of them could demonstrate singing with an engaged body, which gave their sound energy and good tone.

Head Tone. When preparing for performances, I would lead the students through warm-up exercises to help students access their head tone. An exercise called “Elevator” was used, in which the students allowed their voices to slide up and down as they moved their bodies up and down. I would also use a sound cube that had different contour diagrams on each side. A student would roll the cube and the class would sing the selected contour shape on a vowel. These shapes led students to use the full extensions of their ranges. During these exercises, I did not talk about what was happening physiologically. The images used in these exercises achieved what was necessary to allow students to access their head tone. The movement and interactive components in these warm-ups were effective ways to engage students in singing.

Vocal Cords. In May 2019, I taught students a lesson about the vocal cords. When teaching students about their vocal cords, black and white diagrams were used (Davids & LeTour, 2012). Students did not find these images disturbing. A diagram showing a side profile of the head and larynx was shown. I taught the students where the vocal folds were housed (behind the Adam’s apple). Students were asked to gently touch their Adam’s apple and speak. They were excited to learn that the vocal cords vibrate when they speak. Diagrams of the vocal folds during different types of phonation (speaking, whispering, singing) were also shown, leading the class into the discussion of healthy vocal use. I also reinforced that in order for the vocal cords to vibrate, the body requires breath. In class 3J, students determined that singing is a whole-body activity.

This method of teaching about physiology was more effective than when I taught the students about breathing using anatomical videos. Students were actively engaged in these discussions as they learned about the voice mechanism. This lesson took place later in the year; therefore, students had matured. Black and white images were also more effective than a video animation with this age of students.

Voice Change. Pineda (2017) supports teaching male students about the voice change before it takes place. The opportunity to talk about the voice change came up numerous times throughout the study. These discussions usually happened after we had welcomed a male singing guest into the classroom. Upon debriefing these visits, students noticed that their own voices were not as deep as the voices of our guests. These discussions did not explain the physiology behind the voice change, but gave the students an awareness of what will happen as they grow and mature. These discussions impacted student learning, as evidenced in Kristopher's peer interview. He highlighted learning that his voice will change as he gets older.

Single-Sex Singing Opportunities

Single-sex singing opportunities were supported by my critical friend. He suggested providing these opportunities when it is musically appropriate. When practicing "Le Train" in French with classes 3S and 3J, I divided students into a girl part and a boy part. This was well received by the students. They were excited to stand and sing with their friends. The students matched one another's dynamic level, even though the numbers of boys and girls were not always equal. Students asked if we could repeat this exercise.

We tried this strategy again when we learned the round "Sweetly Sings the Donkey" and "Rattlesnake Skipping Song". One challenge with dividing students into parts according to gender for these songs was the tendency for students to see this as an opportunity for

competition. Much care was taken to ensure the boys did not try to sing louder than the girls or shout. When I presented it as an opportunity to see which group could balance with the other group most effectively, the boys started listening to the other part and balance improved.

Providing single-sex singing opportunities was an effective strategy for engaging students in singing. Students knew they had a specific role in the song and the competitive element between boys and girls motivated students to sing.

Male Role Models

The literature review supports the idea of possible selves (Freer, 2010), which can be fostered by male role models. Our guest artist, who worked with the students for five periods, was male. This provided the students with the opportunity to work with a male voice in the classroom. He is an active musician and performer and demonstrated that music-making is an activity appropriate for males.

In debriefing the artist sessions, students noticed how our guest artist's voice was lower than mine, leading to a discussion of the voice change in males and the different ranges of male and female voices. This led to the discussion of how the boys' voices are pitched now. Students concluded that the boys' voices may be a bit lower than girls, but generally, they can sing similar notes to the girls. We did not label young male and female voices as treble voices at the time, but this labelling of their voices happened later in the study.

I hoped to have some singing parents and grandparents come into the music classroom and sing with the students. No parents volunteered, so I sought out other males to invite into the classroom. I was advised by my critical friend that it may be counterproductive to have a male come in and sing alongside the students as they may get confused about which octave to sing.

This did not happen as visits from guests were brief and I provided a strong vocal model in the students' octave.

A grade 7 male alumnus of the music program under study was invited to join classes 3S and 3J for a music class. He was able to join the students for one period each. I highlighted the alumnus' involvement in the choir program and other musical activities. Our guest participated in the songs and activities being learned in the music class that day. Following this visit, class 3J students were asked what singing with an older student was like. They commented that it was "cool". We were able to discuss the octave difference between the grade 3 students' voices and our guest's voice. Class 3S was very excited to welcome our guest and I noticed that male students sitting by our guest seemed more actively engaged in singing than they were regularly.

The school's guidance counsellor, also male, was able to join class 3S in singing "Once an Austrian Went Yodelling". The guidance counsellor had experience singing this song as a student, so he was comfortable singing with this group of grade 3 students. He told the students that this song was one of his favourite songs to sing when he was in grade 4. As the guidance counsellor had a strong rapport with many of the students, they were very excited to sing with him. Because this was a song that he knew and liked, they engaged actively when he sang with them. When he had to leave the classroom, a number of students voiced that they wished he could stay longer. The impact of these visits may not be visible right away, but I hope that these visits will help male students to envision the possibility of being singers as they go through life.

Examples of Male Singing

Throughout the course of the study, many examples of male singing were featured and discussed with grade 3 and 2/3 students. Rather than beginning classes with music games as suggested by Baldock (2009) in the literature review, I would often start the class with a video

example of people singing. The classes under study showed a strong interest in music videos and this was a springboard for discussing many musical concepts, including the singing voices of different genders. Students watched and discussed performances by Pentatonix, Hoosli (Ukrainian Male Chorus from Winnipeg), Shawn Mendes, the Winnipeg Boys Choir, and Burton Cummings. They also listened to the male singing examples on the MLPIL. In order to represent all students in the listening examples, videos of mixed-gender choirs were also featured, including performances by the Manitoba Junior Provincial Honour Choir, Central Manitoba Youth Choir, and Sonatrice Singers with the school 4-5 Choir. I tried to bring in examples of local people singing and draw attention to these local singers. Many examples of female artists and choirs were also featured throughout the study, including: the Australian Girls Choir, Alma Deutscher, Faouzia, and all the female voices featured in the MLPIL.

Through these listening examples, students learned to discriminate between different vocal lines and listen for harmonies. Discussions about treble voices and changed voices took place. This was a natural way to introduce the students to the idea of the male voice change. We also had the opportunity to talk about the female voice change. We discussed different voice types and the various ranges of the male and female voices. We also discussed various singing styles featured in the examples and noticed variations in gender between conductors and accompanists. These examples showed students that males and females can be conductors, accompanists, and singers. The more examples to which students were exposed, the more open-minded they became to embracing different voice types and singing styles.

Student Creativity

Students had the opportunity to create a song collaboratively with our guest artist and perform the song at the Grade 2-3 Concert. Some students expressed that they were proud to perform a song that they had helped to create, as evidenced in feedback loops and peer interview responses. Learning about GarageBand and understanding the process behind creating a GarageBand backing track helped students to further engage in the song creation process.

Students had the opportunity to create their own verses to the tune of “Burn Little Candles”. Students had learned this song prior to the start of the study, so it was familiar to them. Certain verses were selected for performance in the Grade 2-3 Concert. In his peer interview, Xavier highlighted that making his own song helped him to be engaged in singing this year.

I often invited students to create their own movement patterns to accompany songs. In the “Rattlesnake Skipping Song”, students were invited to create their own clapping pattern. When learning “I’m a Bone-Legged Chicken”, students were invited to create their own movement patterns and share them with the class. These activities led to much laughter, focus, and engagement.

Building Competence and Confidence

Using the song “Ama Lama”, students were assessed for individual singing in a minor key. They performed the song sequence in partners, taking turns singing. Pairs of students were granted time to spread out and practice on their own. They were invited to sing for their peers when they felt ready. Following these partner assessments, I wrote in my journal, “Allowing them the practice time they needed allowed them to be more successful. There are still a few reticent male singers in each class, but many of them were singing confidently and in tune.”

When preparing and presenting the song with a partner, students were actively engaged in the task at hand.

Due to multiple snow days and school cancellations, practice time for the concert was limited. Even with the limited time available, the students delivered a strong performance. These students love a challenge and were motivated to work hard under pressure, but more practice time might have further developed their confidence. More confidence may have helped to further increase engagement in practices and the final performance.

Chapter Summary

The action research cycle unfolded in four phases. In Phase 1, students welcomed a male guest artist who worked with them to write a song about sharks and gum. Students helped create the title and song lyrics, naming the song “Billie-Bob Sharky”. The guest artist also taught the students how to create short songs and record their voices using GarageBand. The MLP II student survey was reviewed and adapted based on reviewer feedback. The MLP II and FMAP were administered and the results informed repertoire selection for Phases 2 and 3 of the study.

In Phase 2, music was programmed for the Grade 2-3 Concert and local arts festival. Feedback Loop #1 followed the Grade 2-3 Concert and revealed student preferences for songs with funny and weird words, songs that provided adequate challenge, songs that students created, and current songs. This feedback, along with input from my critical friend, informed repertoire selection for the remainder of the study.

In Phase 3, selected repertoire included movement songs, silly songs, songs with funny and weird words, and songs based on student interests (animals, sports, different places around the world, and pop music). Two male guests came to sing with some classes. During this time, class 2/3C suggested and voted upon songs that they wished to sing. They sang these songs at the

end of lessons, which inspired positive participation throughout class. In Phase 4, students took part in peer interviews. Data from these interviews were triangulated with various other sources to determine themes and inform suggestions for further research.

Based on the study findings, interventions that helped to engage students in singing included: inclusion in the music selection process, incorporation of student interests into singing materials, movement, humour, single-sex singing opportunities, male role models, opportunities for students to perform their own creations, and the provision of adequate practice time.

Chapter 5: Summary, Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The final chapter includes a discussion of: (1) the purpose of the study; (2) an overview of the methodology; (3) a summary of results; (4) a discussion of the results; (5) recommendations for practice; and (6) recommendations for further research.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to explore how regular music programming in a school in rural South-Central Manitoba could be designed to foster engagement in singing in grade 3 boys. The study explored the following questions:

1. How does involvement in the selection of music repertoire and activities impact grade 3 boys' engagement in singing?
2. How does incorporating topics of student interest into singing activities impact grade 3 boys' engagement in singing?
3. What accompaniment instruments positively influence engagement in singing for grade 3 boys?
4. How does a psychomotor approach to teaching singing influence grade 3 boys' engagement in singing?
5. How do male role models influence grade 3 boys' engagement in singing?

Overview of the Methodology

In this study, I undertook *teacher action research* (Mac Naughton & Hughes, 2009; Pine, 2009), where I acted as the researcher within my own professional setting (Anderson, Herr, & Nihlen, 2007). Teacher action research was appropriate for this study because it allowed me (the teacher-researcher) the opportunity to respond to student reactions to chosen interventions, in turn making changes to my practice (Anderson et al., 2007; Hendricks, 2006). As teaching is naturally reflective, action research fit well within my professional practice. As part of my

professional practice, I reflect on the teaching strategies I use, create a plan to improve my teaching, reflect on student reactions to the plan, modify my practice, and then plan strategies for the following lessons. This imitates ongoing reflective planning, which is an important part of the action research cycle. All findings in this study were incorporated into the action research cycle, allowing the research to be continuous, flexible, responsive, and continually changing (Hendricks, 2013).

Adaptations made in the classroom as a result of the research findings led to changes in my teaching strategies, in turn supporting the learning of my students. Through the action research cycle, I became an agent of change (Pine, 2009). I changed my practice in response to findings that arose throughout the study, allowing me to positively influence the learning of my students. I became more responsive to student perceptions of chosen interventions (Anderson et al., 2007). I actively sought student feedback, which I have not always done in past teaching experiences. Listening to the perceptions of my students allowed me to plan repertoire that incorporated their preferred modes of learning (like movement and games), and some of their interests. It also helped me to choose songs with engaging lyrics.

Choosing engaging repertoire and activities led many students to show positive attitudes toward singing and attending music classes. When male students were engaged, they actively learned new skills and behaviour challenges lessened. I was able to teach without being interrupted by negative behaviour choices. The decrease in behaviour issues from boys allowed my female students to learn without interruption, therefore benefitting all students. I look forward to incorporating many of the teaching strategies from this study in future years, as well as seeking student feedback regarding chosen repertoire and activities.

As a result of doing this work, I feel that my reflective process has changed. When things are not going well in the classroom, I keep reminding myself of the strategies that worked well throughout this action research study. I am then able to make changes to my practice that often positively influence student engagement and learning. I keep going back to, “What did the students think? What are their perceptions?” Creating space for the student voice and student perceptions has positively influenced my teaching practice.

Participants and Consent

Participants in the study were ten grade 3 boys from a rural community in South-Central Manitoba. Participants were from two classes of Grade 3 General Music and one class of Grade 2/3 General Music. Participants made up 29% of the grade 3 males in the classes under study. This study took place within a mixed gender context. All students in these classes took part in the activities/materials of instruction, but only grade 3 boys were participants in the study.

In order to carry out an ethical study, data were generated from all students in grade 3 and 2/3 for the duration of the study. In June, all students in these classes were invited to be participants in the study. Permission was sought to use their recorded data in my final research report and future research presentations. Only data from grade 3 boys were recorded and analyzed in this study.

In early January, a class discussion about the study took place and an information note was sent home to parents, providing them with initial information about the project as well as the opportunity to ask questions. To reduce teacher influence on informed consent, consent/assent forms were sent home following the submission and approval of final reports in June. Completed forms were given to the homeroom teacher and placed in an envelope. The envelope was given to me following the submission deadline.

Data Generation and Analysis

Several forms of data were generated and analyzed in this study. First, two initial survey instruments (the MLP II and FMAP) were administered to determine students' preferred activities in music class, musical backgrounds, preferred music styles, and their interests in and out of school. Activities and repertoire were programmed based on the survey results and information from the literature review. Second, I kept a journal to reflect on the chosen teaching materials, activities, and strategies, as well as record observations of students in the class. Third, students participated in peer interviews where they discussed and recorded how the songs and activities in music class impacted their feelings, attitudes, and engagement surrounding singing. As part of the action research cycle, grade 3 and 2/3 music programming evolved and changed in response to teacher, student, and peer reflections and feedback.

To ensure validity of the findings, a critical friend was consulted to offer differing perspectives on my interpretation of the data. Feedback loops acted as a form of member checking where students affirmed or offered differing perspectives on the interpretation of the data.

Additional Data Sources

Reflections on changes in programming were recorded in my journal approximately once per week. The textual data from the journal were studied for patterns to determine themes.

At the end of the study, pairs of students participated in peer interviews. Interview findings were triangulated with other data sources to affirm themes and inform research results (Hendricks, 2006). The perspectives gained from a critical friend and feedback loops with students were also used to triangulate and validate research results.

Summary of the Results

Changes in programming as a result of the planned interventions positively influenced male engagement in singing throughout the study. The triangulation of data sources revealed the themes discussed below.

Confirmed Positive Interventions

The following interventions were supported in the literature review and confirmed by study findings.

Beat, Rhythm and Layering of Sounds. Students talked about the importance of a good beat in the music that they sing. This was also reflected in their musical preferences as evidenced in Section 2 of the MLP II. Male participants preferred rock music, which has a strong and audible beat. They were drawn to sing and move to songs with a strong percussive pulse and a layering of sounds. This relates to Harrison's (2008) interviews with male singers, revealing that these singers perceived up-tempo music with a strong rhythmic pulse to be more masculine than soft, slow, and classical music.

Students suggested the opportunity to beatbox in songs and some would attempt this skill occasionally. This directly relates to Freer's (2012) claim that to engage boys in singing one needs to use highly rhythmic repertoire. It also relates to information from the literature review explaining the male attraction to music with high dynamism and a layering of sounds (Hall, 2005; May, 1985 as cited in Sherban, 1995).

Movement. More movement was a common response from male students when asked about ways to make singing more engaging. Students requested doing more action songs and having more movement opportunities during singing activities. This intervention is supported in

the literature review (Bourne, 2009; Freer, 2007; Gurian et al., 2001) and I made many attempts to incorporate movement into grade 3 music programming.

Games. Incorporating more games into singing activities was a recurring student request. William, a participant in this study, suggested playing games before and after singing activities. This supports Baldock's (2009) claim that students are much more willing to try music activities when they have had the chance to play a game.

Instrumental Accompaniment. In his peer interview, August specified that playing instruments helped him to engage in singing. On the FMAP, numerous male participants indicated that playing instruments was their favourite music classroom activity. In the literature, researchers discussed male students' draw to guitar (Hale, 2006) and drum accompaniment (Mizener, 1990). Study findings confirmed that male participants preferred singing with the guitar and drums. They were also drawn to singing with piano accompaniment.

Student Creations. In Feedback Loop #1, some participants expressed pride in performing songs they had created. In his peer interview, Xavier expressed that making his own song helped him to be engaged in singing. Composition is a practical intervention that is supported by Mason (2009) to help meet the learning needs of males (Power, 2008). Study findings indicate that singing their own creations is an effective way to engage males in singing.

Humour. Previous research indicates that humour is a way to successfully engage students in singing (Hall, 2005; Neu & Weinfeld, 2007). Throughout the course of the study, students enjoyed and actively engaged in singing songs that they perceived to be funny. In his peer interview, James specified that singing funny songs helped him to be engaged in singing. Some students also specified that their own creations had made the audience laugh at the concert. Making others laugh was something that students found to be fun and engaging.

Not all study participants enjoyed singing silly songs, as voiced by Walter and Jacob. This leads me to draw attention to the difference between songs perceived as funny and songs that are perceived as silly. Walter and Jacob found silly songs to be synonymous with “cheesy” songs. This tension leads me to recommend dialogue with students when introducing silly songs to ensure that all students find them humorous. Since not all students will have the same sense of humour, some humorous songs may be accepted by groups of students, while others may not be accepted.

Current Music. Walter specified early in the study that kids want to sing current music. He said very specifically that they do not want to sing “the classics”. Jacob reiterated this idea toward the end of the study. I interpreted these comments as a desire to sing music other than folk music. Findings from previous research point to students’ preferences for popular (familiar) music and the effectiveness of incorporating this style into the teaching of singing (Pineda, 2017). The literature also reports the aversion of many students to folk music or music intended for pedagogical purposes (Mizener, 1990; Sherban, 1995). Jacob and Walter’s viewpoints support this. Singing the current song “Believe” by Shawn Mendes was well-received by students, as indicated by general engagement when the class was learning the song, feedback loops, and peer interview responses. William described singing “Believe” as the time when he was most engaged in singing this school year.

Suggesting Songs. The literature supports that boys tend to engage best with music that is familiar to them (Pineda, 2017; Neu & Weinfeld, 2007). Taylor (2009) recommends building upon male students’ musical preferences when selecting and programming music to develop positive feelings toward singing (Neu & Weinfeld; Pineda). Renwick and McPherson (2002)

suggest that giving boys some ownership in the music selection process can also help to increase their engagement with the material.

In agreement with the literature, Walter and Jacob proposed that students should be able to suggest the songs they would like to sing. Students in 2/3C were given the opportunity to suggest and vote on familiar songs. Allowing students the opportunity to take ownership in the music selection process was received positively by the students and fostered engagement in the singing process.

Emergent Positive Interventions

The following interventions were not prevalent in the review of literature. They emerged throughout the study and were confirmed through study findings.

Appealing Text. An intervention that was not a focus in the research literature was students' engagement with songs featuring funny and weird (unexpected) words. This was mentioned briefly in relation to boys' desire for humour in learning (Neu & Weinfeld, 2007). The significance of this theme may not have been revealed in this study if the students had not had the opportunity to sing the song "Say What?" The students' engagement with singing funny and unexpected words in this song led to the exploration of numerous songs with similar texts throughout the study ("Rattlesnake Skipping Song", "Ama Lama", "Hullamackadoo"). In Feedback Loop #1, students explained the similarity between "Say What?" and a tongue twister. "Rattlesnake Skipping Song" was also similar to a tongue twister, and students remained engaged trying to master it.

Adequate Amount of Challenge. A finding not revealed in the literature was the students' desire to sing songs that provided them with an adequate amount of challenge. As explained by Kristopher, songs need to be challenging, but not too challenging. Participants

indicated that “Say What?” provided them with an adequate amount of challenge. “Ama Lama” also provided an adequate amount of challenge. This balance between challenge and skill led to increased engagement or *flow* (Freer, 2009; Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). “Hullamackadoo” was too challenging and was therefore not as engaging as the two previously mentioned songs.

Rhythmic Speech. Another emergent intervention in this study was programming songs that use rhythmic speech. Songs that utilized rhythmic speech, like “Rattlesnake Skipping Song” and “Letters and Shapes”, were often quite engaging for the students throughout the course of the study. When students in class 2/3C were learning the song “Say What?”, they suggested changing some sections to rap. Walter also specified that “kids want to rap” during Feedback Loop #2. Incorporating rhythmic speech or rap sections into songs may be an additional way that teachers can engage male students in the singing process.

Discussion of the Results

Research Question #1

How does involvement in the selection of music repertoire and activities impact grade 3 boys' engagement in singing?

Numerous times throughout the study, Walter suggested giving students the opportunity to pick songs. Walter's suggestion brings me to conclude that the opportunity to be included in the selection of repertoire has potential to positively affect student engagement in the singing process. This was also reflected throughout the study when many students reacted positively to making collaborative decisions about repertoire. Students in class 2/3C looked forward to the time at the end of their lessons when they could sing the songs that they had selected.

Research Question #2

How does incorporating topics of student interest into singing activities impact grade 3 boys' engagement in singing?

Interests presented in student surveys were sports, animals, places around the world, and pop music. All four interests were incorporated into the selected repertoire. Students were engaged in singing songs about sports, which included “The Hockey Song” and “Play Ball”. This was supported in Joshua’s peer interview when he specified the significance of the song “Take Me Out to the Ball Game (Play Ball)”. Students were also engaged when singing songs about animals, including “Rattlesnake Skipping Song”, “Sweetly Sings the Donkey”, “Tingalayo”, and “Billie-Bob Sharky”. Students actively engaged in singing songs from places around the world including Canada (“Rattlesnake Skipping Song”), the Caribbean (“Tingalayo”), Austria (“Once an Austrian Went Yodelling”), and Scotland (“I’m a Bone-Legged Chicken”). The pop song “Believe” by Shawn Mendes was learned and performed at the Grade 2-3 Concert. Singing this style of music led to much student engagement, as indicated in feedback loops and peer interviews. The style of the song matches the interest in pop music identified by students.

In peer interviews, responses to singing about student interests were generally positive. Songs that did not incorporate student interests, including “Hullamackadoo” and “Captain Don’t Side Track Your Train”, were not received as positively. Singing about student interests helped to positively impact student engagement in singing throughout the study.

Research Question #3

What accompaniment instruments positively influence engagement in singing for grade 3 boys?

In their peer interview responses, eight out of ten male participants responded positively to singing with accompanying instruments. This indicates that accompanying instruments do

help to engage male students in singing. Peer interviews and class discussions revealed that male students prefer singing with guitar, drums, and piano.

Research Question #4

How does a psychomotor approach to teaching singing influence grade 3 boys' engagement in singing?

Through this study, I learned that teaching students to understand vocal physiology is helpful when teaching students what an engaged body looks like and how this affects the voice. Care must be taken to teach about physiology in a way that is age appropriate. It is important to know your students before using anatomical images or videos. The same concepts can be taught through demonstrations, imagery, analogies, explanations, and warm-up activities that incorporate movement. Although understanding vocal physiology is crucial to good tone production and healthy singing, teaching singing using a psychomotor approach was not the most effective strategy for engaging grade 3 boys in singing. Peer interview results confirm that many male students were not actively engaged in the lessons about the physiology of the singing voice.

Research Question #5

How do male role models influence grade 3 boys' engagement in singing?

The literature supports the idea of possible selves (Freer, 2010; Hallam, 2002), which can be fostered by male role models. The opportunity for students to work with a male guest artist who is an active musician and performer demonstrated that music-making is an activity appropriate for males. They also had the opportunity to sing with a male grade 7 student and the male school guidance counsellor.

I noticed that male grade 3 students participated actively in singing activities when they had the opportunity to sing with male guests. In peer interviews, eight out of ten male students

answered that singing is an activity for boys and girls. I believe this can be attributed in part to the students' exposure to male singing models and guests. Understanding that singing is something males can do increased engagement in singing, therefore building the confidence of the male singers under study.

Recommendations for Practice

Incorporating Student Interests

This study has confirmed that incorporating student interests into singing materials is an effective way to engage my male students in singing. Therefore, I will continue to get to know the interests of my students and incorporate them into musical repertoire as often as possible.

As students completed the MLP II, which was designed to help me learn about student interests and preferences, I was struck by the high number of students who struggled with reading and writing at this age. In Feedback Loop #2, some students suggested a verbal poll to learn about student interests and musical preferences. From my perspective, a verbal poll would likely gain higher quality information and be more efficient than the MLP II as it is currently presented. Students would have the opportunity to clarify their responses if they were polled verbally. When administering this survey in the future, I plan to take a verbal poll of student interests and favourite songs. Section 2 could continue to be used in its current form as it does not require students to write extensively.

Incorporating Student Suggestions

Inviting students to suggest songs they would like to sing and allowing them to vote was a successful exercise in class 2/3C. Singing their own suggested songs engaged all students in the singing process and students left music class feeling happy. In the future, I plan to incorporate this exercise into music classes, starting as young as grade 2. This may prove particularly

effective in classes where student behaviour is challenging. This strategy can be used sparingly, but I now know that it is an effective way to motivate and engage hard-to-reach students. Classes that display few behaviour issues would likely also enjoy singing songs that they suggest. A creative idea for incorporating these ideas could be through the use of a song suggestion box.

For certain occasions like performances, I plan to include students in the repertoire selection process. As supported in the study, students were more engaged in singing the songs that they helped to choose. This opportunity gave them a sense of ownership over the songs they were singing.

Incorporating Student Feedback

I found that feedback loops and class discussions were the most effective way to learn how students felt about chosen repertoire and activities. From these discussions, I could best make decisions about how to engage students in future music activities. In the future, I plan to talk to my students about chosen activities and repertoire often.

An engaged class is a class that learns. When all students are engaged, behaviour issues are reduced. In the past, when male students were disengaged, their behaviour issues made it difficult for other students in the class to learn, causing many students to become discouraged and disengaged. I noticed a huge decrease in male behaviour issues when my male students were engaged in the chosen songs and activities throughout the course of this study. This benefitted all of my students. Giving students the opportunity to voice their thoughts and opinions could provide me with the information I need to program engaging materials for all the students in my classes.

Incorporating Current Music

Throughout the study, students expressed a desire to sing current music. They were engaged in singing music written by Shawn Mendes, an artist who is currently played on the radio. They were drawn to the music that they heard outside of school and music to which they were familiar. I plan to incorporate current music into future programming to engage and inspire students. I plan to choose current music that has pedagogical value, is age-appropriate, and aids in vocal development. I can use current music to teach many pedagogical concepts, including rhythm, instrumentation, style, melody, and beat-keeping. I will also program songs of other styles and genres, but will teach them alongside current music.

Guitar was a preferred accompaniment instrument in this study. Many current songs feature guitar, so I plan to incorporate guitar into these pieces. Students in the study also suggested adding rap or rhythmic speech to songs, so I will continue to search for current music that includes these elements to further appeal to my students.

Incorporating Singing Games

Singing games were suggested by participants in this study as a way to further engage them in the singing process. To increase competence and confidence, I plan to program singing games with individual singing opportunities. Often students sing in a group and do not have the opportunity to hear how they sound when singing individually. These individual singing opportunities will give students the chance to hear their own singing voice and grow comfortable with it.

Incorporating Multimodal Learning

In response to student requests for more instrument playing and movement, I plan to offer a variety of activities that incorporate singing, instrument playing, and movement simultaneously

to further engage students. I will offer this in the form of rotation activities in which students have the opportunity to learn and practice all the parts. This is similar to many activities taught through the Orff approach. In the past, I have found many ideas in this format in the Game Plan Curriculum by Kriske and DeLelles (2006, 2007). In these multimodal activities, I can adapt parts for different abilities. When the song is performed or played for the final time, students can choose to perform the part that matches their comfort and skill level.

Incorporating Percussion

During sessions with our guest artist, students were drawn to the sound of percussive backing tracks created in GarageBand. They were drawn to create tracks that used these types of sounds. Because these sounds were so appealing, I plan to use these types of tracks as a background for songs and musical activities to increase student engagement in singing. These tracks could be used to accompany songs and, in so doing, add another layer of texture. I could use these tracks to accompany and add interest to beat-keeping or rhythm-reading activities. I could also use acoustic percussion instruments to accompany such activities.

Incorporating Vocal Pedagogy for Children

I learned that students at this grade level may not be ready to learn about the specifics of human physiology. I recommend teaching students about the voice through the use of hands-on visuals (like a breathing ball or singing cube) and analogies. Analogies, such as being rooted like a tree to facilitate proper singing posture or filling up a spare tire of air to facilitate deep breathing, have proven to be effective. Movement can also be an active way for students to learn how to use their voices.

When teaching students about the human voice, I plan to openly discuss the quality of the treble voice. It is important for all students at this age to understand that they have a treble voice

and that someday this voice will change. While boys and girls at this age both have treble voices, the tone quality is different for students of each gender. I plan to draw attention to these qualities to help students develop pride in their own sound.

Incorporating Male Vocal Models

The idea of possible selves (Freer, 2010) claims that students must envision themselves doing an activity in order for them to try that activity in the future. Seeing older males sing allows boys to envision their possible selves as singers. FMAP findings revealed that the preferred songs and bands/singers of grade 3 boys primarily featured male voices, indicating the influence of male singers on these boys. In the future, I plan to provide many examples of males singing (both live and recorded). I plan to invite male singers into the classroom as often as possible to demonstrate the many ways in which males sing and show young boys that singing is an acceptable male activity.

Recommendations for Further Research

How Performing Influences Engagement in Singing

In the preliminary reading for this study, I discovered a research article that discussed performance anxiety and its impact on students in grade 6 when playing piano for an audience (Ryan, 2004). In Ryan's study, male students displayed significantly higher levels of performance anxiety than their female counterparts. In the past, I have noticed higher levels of anxiety in male students prior to a performance, negatively affecting their engagement in rehearsals. Numerous participants in this study stated that they enjoyed performing at their concert and the local arts festival, but I had no way of measuring their anxiety levels before or throughout each performance. I would recommend further research on performance anxiety and its effect on student engagement and participation in singing, especially as students get older.

How Male Teachers Influence Engagement in Singing

As a female teacher, I have always wondered whether singing is portrayed as a feminine activity because the role model in the classroom is female. Sources in the literature support this assumption (Sherban, 1995; Welch et al., 1997). Exploring the influence of male singing examples and male role models in this study leads me to recommend further research in this area. A comparative study looking at the perspectives of students who have a male music teacher and students who have a female music teacher would help to answer the question, “How do male teachers influence engagement in singing for their male students?”

How Male Role Models Influence Engagement in Singing

Seeing the positive effect of male role models on grade 3 boys in this study leads me to recommend a longitudinal study that follows boys as they go through their schooling. A comparative study which looks at boys who have access to strong male singing models and those who do not would help to further answer the question, “How do male role models influence grade 3 boys’ engagement in singing?”

How Acceptance of One’s Own Voice Influences Engagement in Singing

I noticed that when students recorded their own voices in GarageBand, they were often startled by the sound. Students would make faces or giggle when they watched or listened to recordings of their own performances. For me, part of engaging in singing meant learning to like and accept the sound of my own voice. Further research is recommended to discover ways to help students become comfortable with the sounds of their own voices and learn to accept and appreciate these sounds. This would require developing strategies for building self-acceptance, competence, and confidence. This may be another key piece to engaging young students in singing and encouraging lifelong singing endeavors.

Chapter Summary

The purpose of the study was to explore how regular music programming in a school in rural South-Central Manitoba could be designed to foster engagement in singing in grade 3 boys. Participants in the study were ten grade 3 boys from a rural community in South-Central Manitoba. Participants were from two classes of Grade 3 General Music and one class of Grade 2/3 General Music. This study took place within a mixed gender context.

Several forms of data were generated and analyzed in this study. First, two initial survey instruments (the MLPII and FMAP) were administered to determine students' preferred activities in music class, musical backgrounds, preferred music styles, and their interests. Activities and repertoire were programmed based on the survey results and information from the literature review. Second, I kept a journal to reflect on the chosen teaching materials, activities, and strategies. Third, students participated in peer interviews where they discussed and recorded how the songs and activities in music class impacted their feelings, attitudes, and engagement surrounding singing. Grade 3 and 2/3 music programming evolved and changed in response to teacher, student, and peer reflections and feedback.

In response to the research questions in this study, I learned that the most effective interventions for engaging grade 3 boys in singing were: including students in the repertoire selection process, incorporating student interests into the selection of musical repertoire, accompanying songs on the guitar, drums and piano, and incorporating male role models into the teaching of singing. Other effective interventions included: selecting songs with a strong beat and rhythmic interest, incorporating movement, incorporating singing games, providing opportunities for student creativity, incorporating humour, incorporating current music, choosing songs with appealing texts, providing opportunities for rhythmic speech, and programming songs that provide an adequate amount of challenge.

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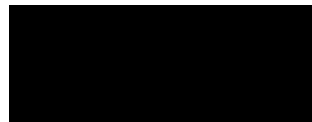
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APPENDIX A- LETTER TO SUPERINTENDENT

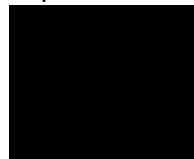
Melissa Cole



February 28, 2018



Superintendent



School Division

Dear Superintendent:

As part of the completion of my Master of Music Education Degree, I am required to write a thesis. This will be the final component of my degree. Writing my thesis will require a research component. I have spoken with [REDACTED] School Principal about the possibility of doing action research with my own students in the 2018-2019 school year and have received a positive response.

I am writing this letter to explain my ideas for a study and to seek your permission to carry out this study in [REDACTED] School Division.

The purpose of the study would be to establish how regular music programming can be designed to foster positive attitudes towards singing in Grade 3 boys. The study would explore the following questions:

- How does involvement in the music selection process influence Grade 3 boys' attitudes towards singing?
- How does incorporating topics of interest into singing activities impact Grade 3 boys' attitudes towards singing?
- How does instrumental accompaniment impact Grade 3 boys' attitudes towards singing?
- How do public performances impact Grade 3 boys' attitudes towards singing?
- How does teacher gender impact Grade 3 boys' attitudes towards singing?

I hope to administer a survey in regularly scheduled music classes near the beginning of the school year to generate information on Grade 3 students' interests and musical preferences. The data from this survey will help to inform my Grade 3 music programming for the year. After the students' concert, I hope to conduct interviews in which I ask male Grade 3 students how the change in music programming has impacted their feelings and attitudes towards music class and singing.

The study would be incorporated into regularly scheduled music classes and would not be disruptive to student learning. It is intended to help improve the learning of all students in Grade 3 Music and to foster a love of music-making and singing. This would help to support and inform my teaching practices at the Grade 4 and 5 level and hopefully help to bolster participation in the Collegiate music programs.

In the process of conducting this research, I am required to complete an Ethics Review Process with Brandon University. Does [REDACTED] School Division have a review process of its own? Data would only be gathered from students whose parents sign the appropriate consent forms, specifying that students may leave the study at any time. Data gathered would be protected, as well as the identities of students involved in the study.

Thank you for considering this project. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "M Cole".

Melissa Cole

Note: At the time this letter was sent, some matters that are not relevant to the study were also included. They have been removed. The identity of the school division, school, and divisional staff have been protected. Since writing this letter, the researcher has gotten married and changed her name, but the original name remains on this letter. Changes have also been made to the research questions.

APPENDIX B- INFORMATION NOTE INFORMING PARENTS OF A RESEARCH STUDY

IF YOU REQUIRE A TRANSLATION OF THIS LETTER IN A LANGUAGE OTHER THAN ENGLISH, PLEASE CONTACT [REDACTED] SCHOOL

January 7, 2019

Dear parents/guardians of grade 3 and 2/3 students,

Last school year I was away from [REDACTED] School completing courses for my Master of Music Education Degree at Brandon University. The final component of my degree is completing a research study for my thesis. The purpose of the study is to learn how music classes can be designed to engage grade 3 and 2/3 students in singing, with a specific focus on grade 3 boys. This study has been designed to benefit and improve the learning of all students in grade 3 and 2/3.

From now until the end of June, I will be studying my own teaching and the effectiveness of the activities I use in Grade 3 and 2/3 Music. I will be keeping a journal about my teaching and the things I am learning by trying new teaching strategies. Different activities will be incorporated into music classes to help improve student engagement including: surveys on students' musical interests and preferences, class discussions about new activities, and peer interviews where students talk about their reactions to the new strategies.

If you have any questions or concerns about the project itself or the methods used, you may contact me at [REDACTED] School at [REDACTED] or 204-[REDACTED]. You may also contact my thesis advisor, Dr. Sheila Scott, at Brandon University at scotts@brandonu.ca. The Brandon University Research Ethics Committee (BUREC) can be contacted about ethics related questions at burec@brandonu.ca or 204-727-9712. If you or your child have any concerns about your rights or treatment in connection with the research project, you can also contact BUREC.

Sincerely,

Melissa Spraggs

Music Teacher

[REDACTED] School

APPENDIX C- CONSENT/ASSENT FORM FOR GRADE 3 AND 2/3 STUDENTS

IF YOU REQUIRE A TRANSLATION OF THIS LETTER IN A LANGUAGE OTHER THAN ENGLISH, PLEASE CONTACT [REDACTED] SCHOOL

June 18, 2019

Dear parents/guardians of grade 3 and 2/3 students,

As explained in an earlier letter, I have been studying my teaching practice as part of my Masters Thesis research. The purpose of my study is to learn how music classes can be designed to engage grade 3 and 2/3 students in singing, with a specific focus on grade 3 boys.

Since January, I have been trying new strategies in grade 3 and 2/3 music to engage students in singing. Students have taken surveys on their musical interests and preferred music activities. These surveys have influenced the music I have chosen to teach. Students have been a part of lessons where they learned how the body is used to make sound. Students have taken part in class discussions about the music we are learning to sing and how it affects their engagement. They have completed peer interviews where they discussed and recorded how the new strategies have affected their engagement in singing.

I have been keeping a journal throughout the course of my study and reflecting on the effectiveness of the teaching strategies I have chosen to use. Some of these reflections will be used in my final research report. As part of the final research report, I would like to include student perspectives. I am therefore writing this letter inviting your child to be a participant in the research study. I am seeking your permission to use information collected from your child as a part of my role as a teacher in my final research report.

Only research information (data) generated from students who have completed and handed in this consent form will be used in my final research report. There will be no negative consequences if your child decides not to participate in the study or wishes to withdraw their permission at any time. Students will not be questioned about their reasons for withdrawal. Withdrawal forms can be obtained from the school office and returned to the school office. Consent can be withdrawn up to June 30, 2019. If your child submits a signed withdrawal form to the office, your child's data will be removed from the study and destroyed (shredded).

As your child's teacher, I hold the dual role of teacher and researcher. I am aware that you or your child may feel pressure to agree to participate because I am your child's teacher. Please know that participation is completely voluntary. Your child's participation or non-participation will have no effect on their grades or on their relationship with me. Please also know that student records will not be accessed for research purposes.

To reduce any pressure students may feel to participate in order to make me happy, students will return signed consent forms to their homeroom teachers. These forms will be placed in an envelope and delivered to me.

There are no costs associated with participation in the study, nor will incentives be offered. By consenting to your child's participation in this research, you have not waived your rights to legal recourse in the event of research related harm.

Upon completion of the project, I hope to share the results with other teachers and the broader community through research articles, presentations and as a published graduate thesis. In the sharing of study information, the identity of your child would be protected. Alternate names (pseudonyms) will be used to protect the identity of students. The names of the school and school division will not be used. Data provided by your child would also use pseudonyms and be stored in a secure location. Following the completion of my research project, all study information will be destroyed.

If you have any questions or concerns about the project itself or the methods used, you may contact me at [REDACTED] School at [REDACTED] or 204-[REDACTED]. You may also contact my thesis advisor, Dr. Sheila Scott, at Brandon University at scotts@brandonu.ca. The Brandon University Research Ethics Committee (BUREC) can be contacted about ethics related questions at burec@brandonu.ca or 204-727-9712. If you or your child have any concerns about your rights or treatment in connection with the research project, you can also contact BUREC.

Please fill out the attached consent form and return it to your child's homeroom teacher by **Tuesday, June 25, 2019**. Two copies are attached. Please keep one copy for your records.

Thank you for your consideration,

Melissa Spraggs

Music Teacher

[REDACTED] School

YOUR COPY (FOR YOUR RECORDS)

Student's Name _____

FOR PARENT/GUARDIAN

Consent to Participate in a Research Study

I have read the information contained in the attached letter, and,

____ Yes- I give permission for my child to participate in the study.

-OR-

____ No- I do not give permission for my child to participate in the study.

Parent/Guardian Signature _____

Date _____ Contact (phone or email) _____

FOR STUDENT

Assent for Study Participation

I have read the information about the music class study with my parent(s)/guardian(s); and,

____ Yes- I agree to participate in the study.

-OR-

____ No- I do not agree to participate in the study.

Student signature _____ Date _____

RESEARCHER COPY (TO BE RETURNED TO CLASSROOM TEACHER)

Student's Name _____

FOR PARENT/GUARDIAN

Consent to Participate in a Research Study

I have read the information contained in the attached letter, and,

____ Yes- I give permission for my child to participate in the study.

-OR-

____ No- I do not give permission for my child to participate in the study.

Parent/Guardian Signature _____

Date _____ Contact (phone or email) _____

FOR STUDENT

Assent for Study Participation

I have read the information about the music class study with my parent(s)/guardian(s); and,

____ Yes- I agree to participate in the study.

-OR-

____ No- I do not agree to participate in the study.

Student signature _____ Date _____

APPENDIX D- MUSIC LISTENING PREFERENCES AND INTERESTS INVENTORY (MLPII)

Music Listening Preferences and Interests Inventory (MLPII)- Teacher Sheet
 Spraggs (2019)

Section 1:

“The researcher will read the questions aloud. Please write or draw your response below the questions. You may include songs from your cultural background.”

1. Do you have a favourite singer or band? Circle : YES NO
 If yes, please write the name.

2. Do you have a favourite song? Circle : YES NO
 If yes, please write the name.

3. If we could sing one song in music class, what song would you choose?

4. Do you listen to music outside of school? Circle : YES NO
 If yes, write singer/band or radio station names.

5. What musical activities do you take part in outside of school? Please circle:

 Music lessons Dance Choirs Other: _____

 Singing or playing instruments with your family or friends None




6. What is your favourite thing to learn about?

7. What do you enjoy reading about?

8. What do you like to do when you are not at school?

Section 2: The format of this portion of the survey is taken from Hale’s (2006) Student Survey.

“For numbers 9-19, a musical example will be played. For each example, circle ‘I like it’, ‘I’m not sure’ or ‘I don’t like it’”. (The musical example will be played without the researcher announcing the style. The style will be named after the example is played).

<p>9. Country  “Alberta Bound” by Paul Brandt (0:44-1:24) Musical elements: Melody, texture (instruments and vocal harmony), timbre</p>	<p>10. Popular (Pop) “Symphony” by Clean Bandit featuring Zara Larsson (1:43-2:19) Musical elements: Rhythm, timbre (vocal and instrumental), texture, beat, instruments</p>
<p>11. Rock “We Will Rock You” by Queen (1:13-2:02) Musical elements: Rhythm (accent), texture (instruments with voices and body percussion)</p>	<p>12. Disney “How Far I’ll Go” from Moana (0:38-1:12) Musical elements: Melody, texture, beat, expression, tempo</p>
<p>13. Canadian Folk  “Donkey Riding” by Great Big Sea (1:20-2:25) Musical elements: Melody, timbre (vocal), tempo, texture (instruments)</p>	<p>14. Canadian Indigenous  “One Drum” by Leela Gilday (0:30-1:12) Musical elements: Melody, rhythm, texture (instruments and vocal harmony), expression</p>
<p>15. Jazz “Orange-Colored Sky” by Nat King Cole (1:50-2:22) Musical elements: Melody, texture (instruments), timbre (singing and brass instruments), beat</p>	<p>16. Music of Syria “Lamma Bada” by Constantinople (1:27-2:15) Musical elements: Rhythm, melody, texture (instruments), timbre (vocal), dynamics</p>
<p>17. Mariachi (Mexico) “La Bamba” performed by various artists (0:47-1:25) Musical elements: Melody, rhythm, timbre (vocal), texture (instruments)</p>	<p>18. Music of Eritrea “Numey” by Faytinga (0:40-1:25) Musical elements: Melody, rhythm (beat, accent), texture (instruments), timbre (vocal)</p>
<p>19. Music of the Philippines “Makaugnay” by Joey Ayala and Bagong Lumad (2:40-3:24) Musical elements: Rhythm, timbre (vocal harmony), dynamics (crescendo), texture (instruments), tempo</p>	<p>20. What is your favourite style of music? It can be different than the styles you just heard. (Taylor, 2009)</p>

Name: _____

Music Listening Preferences and Interests Inventory- Student Answer Sheet

Section 1: The researcher will read the questions aloud. Please write or draw your response below the questions. You may include songs from your cultural background.

1. Do you have a favourite singer or band? Circle : YES NO
If yes, please write the name.

-
2. Do you have a favourite song? Circle : YES NO
If yes, please write the name.

-
3. If we could sing one song in music class, what song would you choose?

-
4. Do you listen to music outside of school? Circle: YES NO
If yes, write singer/band or radio station names.

-
5. What musical activities do you take part in outside of school? Please circle:

Music lessons Dance Choirs Other: _____


































Singing or playing instruments with your family or friends None

6. What is your favourite thing to learn about?

-
7. What do you enjoy reading about?

-
8. What do you like to do when you are not at school?
-

Section 2: For numbers 9-19, a musical example will be played. For each example, circle “I like it”, “I’m not sure” or “I don’t like it”.

<p>9.</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;">    </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"> <p>I like it</p> <p>I’m not sure</p> <p>I don’t like it</p> </div>	<p>10.</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;">    </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"> <p>I like it</p> <p>I’m not sure</p> <p>I don’t like it</p> </div>
<p>11.</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;">    </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"> <p>I like it</p> <p>I’m not sure</p> <p>I don’t like it</p> </div>	<p>12.</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;">    </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"> <p>I like it</p> <p>I’m not sure</p> <p>I don’t like it</p> </div>
<p>13.</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;">    </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"> <p>I like it</p> <p>I’m not sure</p> <p>I don’t like it</p> </div>	<p>14.</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;">    </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"> <p>I like it</p> <p>I’m not sure</p> <p>I don’t like it</p> </div>
<p>15.</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;">    </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"> <p>I like it</p> <p>I’m not sure</p> <p>I don’t like it</p> </div>	<p>16.</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;">    </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"> <p>I like it</p> <p>I’m not sure</p> <p>I don’t like it</p> </div>
<p>17.</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;">    </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"> <p>I like it</p> <p>I’m not sure</p> <p>I don’t like it</p> </div>	<p>18.</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;">    </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"> <p>I like it</p> <p>I’m not sure</p> <p>I don’t like it</p> </div>
<p>19.</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;">    </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"> <p>I like it</p> <p>I’m not sure</p> <p>I don’t like it</p> </div>	<p>20. What is your favourite style of music? It can be different than the styles you just heard.</p>

APPENDIX E- MLP II TEACHER REVIEWER CONFIDENTIALITY FORM



MLP II TEACHER REVIEWER CONFIDENTIALITY FORM

December 17, 2018

Dear reviewers,

Thank you for your willingness to review the Music Listening Preferences and Interests Inventory (MLP II). Your review of this survey will help to determine the validity of this newly designed survey instrument.

The title of my study is *Shifts in Regular Music Programming: Engaging Grade 3 Boys in the Singing Process*. It is part of my Master of Music Education Thesis and has been approved by Brandon University Research Ethics Committee. The purpose of this teacher action research study is to learn how music classes can be designed to engage grade 3 and 2/3 students in singing, with a specific focus on grade 3 boys. This study will take place during regularly scheduled grade 3 and 2/3 music classes and has been designed to benefit the learning experiences of all grade 3 and 2/3 students.

I have developed the MLP II to determine the preferred music styles and personal learning interests of grade 3 and 2/3 students. After making the suggested changes, I will be administering the survey to my grade 3 and 2/3 students. The information generated from this survey, along with information from the Music Activity Preferences Inventory (Broquist, 1961; Taylor, 2009), will influence the songs and activities I choose to program in Grade 3 and 2/3 General Music throughout the course of this study (January 2019- June 2019). The students' preferred styles of music (as revealed in the MLP II survey), activities, and student interests will be featured in the programming, while those not preferred by students will be avoided. Additional teaching strategies, including a psychomotor approach to singing and the inclusion of male role models, will also be incorporated into the programming. At the conclusion of the study, students will participate in peer interviews where they discuss and record how the chosen songs and activities have impacted their engagement in singing.

As a reviewer, your contributions will be acknowledged in the study, but your identity and place of work will remain confidential. You will be described as an elementary music teacher meeting the following criteria: currently teach Grade 3 General Music, obtained an education degree with a music background or a music education degree, certified to teach in Manitoba schools, 1-20 years teaching experience. Choosing to not complete the review will not change your relationship with Brandon University. You may choose not to respond to some questions. You may also withdraw as a reviewer at any time over the course of the study by completing the Reviewer Withdrawal Form enclosed in this package.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me by phone: 204-██████. You may also contact my thesis advisor, Dr. Sheila Scott, at Brandon University at scotts@brandonu.ca.

Enclosed is a copy of the survey (with accompanying CD), a feedback form, and a withdrawal form. Please review the survey, complete the review form and return the materials to me, including this signed letter, by **January 17, 2019**. Please keep the withdrawal form to be used if you decide to withdraw your participation as a reviewer at any time over the course of the study. Please read and sign the statements on the following page.



SCHOOL OF MUSIC

270 18th Street, Brandon MB, Canada R7A 6A9 204.727.7388 Music@BrandonU.caBrandonU.ca



MLPII TEACHER REVIEWER CONFIDENTIALITY FORM

I, _____, understand that my identity and place of work will remain confidential. I affirm that I will keep the contents of this survey in strictest confidence.

Signature

Sincerely,

Melissa Spraggs
B. Mus, B. Ed



SCHOOL OF MUSIC

270 18th Street, Brandon MB, Canada R7A 6A9 204.727.7388 Music@BrandonU.ca

BrandonU.ca

APPENDIX F- MLPII REVIEW FORM FOR TEACHER REVIEWERS

Teacher name: _____

Section 1: Please comment on the fittingness of the open-ended questions to achieve their objective (indicated below):

Question	Objective	Fitting/Not Fitting (Please circle one)		Suggestions for changes in wording
1. Who is your favourite singer/band?	Determine musical preferences	Fitting	Not fitting	
2. What is your favourite song?	Determine musical preferences	Fitting	Not fitting	
3. If we could sing one song in music class, what song would you choose?	Determine musical preferences	Fitting	Not fitting	
4. What style of music do you like to listen to at home, in the car, at a sports game, or with your family? Write artist or band names if you remember them.	Determine musical preferences and influences outside of school	Fitting	Not fitting	

5. What musical activities do you take part in outside of school (music lessons, dance, choirs, singing or playing instruments with your family or friends, none)?	Determine musical background and previous exposure to music. Research says that incorporating musical activities from outside school into the music class will help to engage some students (Keddie, 2005; Pineda, 2017; Taylor, 2009).	Fitting	Not fitting	
6. In your homeroom, what is your favourite thing to learn about?	Determine personal interests so they can be incorporated into the teaching of singing (Vercelletto, 2016).	Fitting	Not fitting	
7. What do you enjoy reading about?	Obtain further information on student personal interests. When selecting books to read, students will often select books about topics of interest (Neu & Weinfeld, 2007).	Fitting	Not fitting	

8. What do you like to do when you are not at school?	Determine student interests outside of school. Research states that students will be more engaged in music if it relates to their interests outside of school (Taylor, 2009; Jones, 2014; Pineda, 2017; Power, 2008).	Fitting	Not fitting	
Suggestions for further questions to help determine student interests and/or musical preferences:				

Section 2: In this section, short 30-50 second examples of each style will be played. To demonstrate that vocal music can be performed by males and females, I have alternated between examples of male and female singers. Students will indicate their preferences by circling “I like it”, “I’m not sure” or “I don’t like it”. Please listen to the musical examples on the accompanying CD. Circle “Appropriate” or “Not Appropriate” for each example. “Appropriate” can be defined as suitable for grade 3 and 2/3 students and fitting for demonstrating the selected style.

9. Country	“Alberta Bound” by Paul Brandt	Appropriate	Not Appropriate	Suggestions for alternate song(s):
10. Popular (Pop)	“Symphony” by Clean Bandit featuring Zara Larsson	Appropriate	Not Appropriate	Suggestions for alternate song(s):

11. Rock	“More Than a Feeling” by Boston	Appropriate	Not Appropriate	Suggestions for alternate song(s):
12. Disney	“How Far I’ll Go” from Moana	Appropriate	Not Appropriate	Suggestions for alternate song(s):
13. Canadian Folk	“Canadian Railroad Trilogy” by Gordon Lightfoot	Appropriate	Not Appropriate	Suggestions for alternate song(s):
14. Canadian Indigenous	“One Drum” by Leela Gilday	Appropriate	Not Appropriate	Suggestions for alternate song(s):
15. Jazz	“Orange-Colored Sky” by Nat King Cole	Appropriate	Not Appropriate	Suggestions for alternate song(s):
16. Music of Syria	“Lamma Bada” by Constantinople	Appropriate	Not Appropriate	Suggestions for alternate song(s):
17. Mariachi (Mexico)	“La Bamba” by various artists	Appropriate	Not Appropriate	Suggestions for alternate song(s):
18. Music of Eritrea	“Numey” by Faytinga	Appropriate	Not Appropriate	Suggestions for alternate song(s):
19. Music of the Philippines	“Makaugnay” by Joey Ayala and Bagong Lumad	Appropriate	Not Appropriate	Suggestions for alternate song(s):

APPENDIX G- SURVEY REVIEWER WITHDRAWAL FORM

**Brandon University Research Ethics Survey Reviewer Withdrawal Form**

Shifts in Regular Music Programming: Engaging Grade 3 Boys in the Singing Process

Principal Investigator: Melissa Spraggs

I, _____ have decided to withdraw my participation as a survey reviewer from the research study.

Reviewer signature

DATE

PLEASE RETURN THIS COMPLETED FORM TO MELISSA SPRAGGS



SCHOOL OF MUSIC

270 18th Street, Brandon MB, Canada R7A 6A9 204.727.7388 Music@BrandonU.ca

BrandonU.ca

APPENDIX H- MUSIC ACTIVITY PREFERENCE INVENTORY (MAPI)

Music Activity Preference Inventory (MAPI)- Teacher Sheet

Broquist (1961), Taylor (2009)

Instrument Playing

1. When we play Orff instruments
2. When we play African drums
3. When we play rhythm instruments like maraccas, sandblocks, triangles, tambourines
4. When we play instruments in class without singing
5. When we play instruments in class while singing
6. When we get to choose our own instruments
7. When we learn about instruments of the orchestra

Listening/Analyzing

8. When we listen to recordings of different kinds of music
9. When we draw pictures while listening to music to show how music makes us feel
10. When we listen to men sing
11. When we listen to women sing

Performing

12. When we move to music
13. When we do a folk dance
14. When we are able to practice in small groups
15. When we have time to practice our own solos or patterns
16. When I perform in class
17. When I listen to other students perform in class
18. When the whole class performs together
19. When I hear or watch my own part that has been recorded
20. When I listen to someone perform at an assembly

Creating

21. When I create my own patterns on an Orff instrument (improvise)
22. When we use our own ideas to create music in groups
23. When we use our own ideas to create movement patterns
24. When we create our own actions for songs
25. When the teacher helps us to create and write our own music
26. When we learn to write music notes and rhythms
27. When we learn to read music

Singing

- 28. When we sing action songs
- 29. When we play singing games
- 30. When we sing without accompaniment
- 31. When we sing songs with piano accompaniment
- 32. When we sing songs with a CD accompaniment
- 33. When we sing songs with Orff accompaniment
- 34. When I sing by myself in front of the class

Activities outside of the classroom

- 35. When I sing by myself when no one is listening
- 36. When I sing with my friends
- 37. When I sing with my mom or grandma at home
- 38. When I sing with my dad or grandpa at home
- 39. When I sing with my sibling(s) or cousin(s) at home
- 40. When I play instruments with a family member
- 41. When my family sings or dances together
- 42. When I move to music at home

- 43. What is your favourite music activity in school? (Bowles, 1998; Bowman, 1988)

Name: _____

Music Activity Preference Inventory- Student Check Sheet

I like it



It's OK

I don't
like itI don't
remember
doing it

- | | | | | |
|----|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

- | | | | | |
|-----|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 8. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 9. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 10. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 11. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

- | | | | | |
|-----|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 12. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 13. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 14. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 15. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 16. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 17. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 18. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 19. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 20. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

- | | | | | |
|-----|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 21. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|-----|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|



I like it



It's OK

I don't
like itI don't
remember
doing it

- | | | | | |
|-----|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 22. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 23. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 24. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 25. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 26. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 27. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

- | | | | | |
|-----|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 28. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 29. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 30. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 31. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 32. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 33. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 34. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

- | | | | | |
|-----|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 35. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 36. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 37. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 38. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 39. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 40. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 41. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 42. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

44. What is your favourite music activity in school?

APPENDIX I- FAVOURITE MUSIC ACTIVITIES POLL (FMAP)

Name: _____

Favourite Music Activities

Give each activity a number from 1-6, with 1 being your favourite and 6 being your least favourite.

_____ Playing instruments

_____ Listening to music

_____ Reading and writing music

_____ Dancing

_____ Singing

_____ Playing music games

APPENDIX J- PEER INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Name: _____

Peer Interview Questions

- 1. Tell me about a time when you most enjoyed singing this school year.**

- 2. What activities helped you to be engaged in singing this school year?**

- 3. Your teacher worked to pick songs based on student interests (like animals and sports). How did singing about student interests make you feel?**

- 4. Tell me what you learned about your singing voice this year.**

How does this new information make you feel about singing?

5. Do you feel your singing has improved since the beginning of the school year?

Circle: Yes / No

Why or why not?

6. Describe what it feels like to sing with instruments.

With which instrument do you prefer to sing?

Circle one:

No accompaniment

Guitar

Drums

Piano

Orff instruments

Ukulele

Accompaniment CD

Other: _____

7. Which picture most inspires you to sing? (Circle one)



8. Do you feel that singing is an activity for boys and girls?

Circle: Yes / No

Why or why not?

APPENDIX K- STUDENT PARTICIPANT WITHDRAWAL FORM

**Brandon University Research Ethics Project Withdrawal Form**

Shifts in Regular Music Programming: Engaging Grade 3 Boys in the Singing Process

Principal Investigator: Melissa Spraggs

I, _____ have decided to withdraw my participation from the research study.

Student signature

DATE

Parent signature

DATE

PLEASE RETURN THIS COMPLETED FORM TO THE SCHOOL OFFICE



SCHOOL OF MUSIC

270 18th Street, Brandon MB, Canada R7A 6A9 204.727.7388 Music@BrandonU.ca

BrandonU.ca

APPENDIX L- CRITICAL FRIEND LETTER AND CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

Dear colleague,

Thank you for your willingness to work with me on my thesis research project. The project is titled “Shifts in Regular Music Programming: Engaging Grade 3 Boys in the Singing Process”. It is part of my Master of Music Education Thesis and has been approved by Brandon University Research Ethics Committee. The purpose of this teacher action research study is to learn how music classes in rural South-Central Manitoba can be designed to engage grade 3 boys in singing. This study will take place during regularly scheduled grade 3 and 2/3 music classes and has been designed to benefit the learning experiences of all grade 3 and 2/3 students.

Data will be generated in the following ways:

- I will administer **two surveys** at the beginning of the study to gather information about grade 3 and 2/3 students’ personal learning interests and musical preferences. This will influence the songs that are selected for teaching and learning in grade 3 general music for the remainder of the study.
- I will keep a **journal** to reflect on the research questions over the course of the study.
- **Group discussions** about the findings of the research will take place to include students in the interpretation of the findings.
- **Peer interviews** will be administered at the end of the study to give grade 3 and 2/3 students the opportunity to express how this year’s music programming has impacted their feelings and attitudes towards music class and singing.

My hope for our discussions will be a form of peer debriefing of the research findings. I will value your experience and perspectives in the interpretation of the results. Officially in my study, I will refer to you as my critical friend.

Please sign the confidentiality agreement on the following page to indicate your understanding of the sensitive nature of the information that will be shared in our discussions and to confirm that you consent to being part of this research project.

Sincerely,

Melissa Spraggs

Brandon University Research Ethics Critical Friend Confidentiality Agreement

I, _____ affirm that I will not disclose or make known any matter or thing related to the participants over the course of this research project.

By signing this document, I give my consent to participate in this research study.

Critical Friend

DATE

APPENDIX M- TIMELINE FOR PLANNED INTERVENTIONS

January and February

- ☐ Step 1- Send out MLPII survey to music teacher reviewers
- ☐ Step 2- Facilitate grade 3 and 2/3 class discussion about research project (how I am studying my own practice), send out parent information letter, give presentation to staff
- ☐ Step 3- Begin keeping research journal
- ☐ Step 4- Adjust MLPII survey based on reviewer feedback
- ☐ Step 5- Administer surveys (MAPI and MLPII) to grade 3 and 2/3 students
- ☐ Step 6- Interpret survey results
- ☐ Step 7- Adjust programming based on results of the survey
- ☐ Step 8- Bring in male guest artist to work with students on song-writing
- ☐ Step 9- Incorporate technology into song-writing
- ☐ Step 10- Invite parent and community volunteers to come into classroom and sing with the students

March and April

- ☐ Step 1- Meet with critical friend to gain a different perspective and challenge biases found in research journal
- ☐ Step 2- Adjust teaching and repertoire based on peer feedback
- ☐ Step 3- Prepare students for singing performances, placing a special focus on a psychomotor approach to singing when teaching repertoire
- ☐ Step 4- Lead student singing performances, in which students will share some of their own compositions
- ☐ Step 5- Facilitate discussions/debriefs about the singing experiences (Feedback Loop #1)

May

- ☐ Step 1- Continue working with students on chosen repertoire
- ☐ Step 2- Meet with critical friend to gain a different perspective and challenge biases encountered through journaling
- ☐ Step 3- Adjust teaching and repertoire based on peer feedback

June

- ☐ Step 1- Teach students how to ask interview questions and fill out peer interview forms
- ☐ Step 2- Administer peer interviews
- ☐ Step 3- Interpret peer interviews
- ☐ Step 4- Write and submit final report cards
- ☐ Step 5- Upon approval of report cards from administration, lead a discussion in grade 3 and 2/3 music class about participation in the study
- ☐ Step 6- Send home consent forms to parents (June 18, 2019)
- ☐ Step 7- Collect consent forms from homeroom teachers (June 25, 2019)
- ☐ Step 8- Feedback Loop #2
- ☐ Step 9- Complete research journal
- ☐ Step 10- Shred surveys and interviews from non-participants and those who have withdrawn from the project

APPENDIX N- PUBLIC PRESENTATION MATERIALS

Shifts in Regular Music Programming: Engaging Grade 3 Boys in the Singing Process

Melissa Spraggs- Thesis Research Project

In partial fulfillment for the degree Master of Music Education, Brandon University

Purpose

The purpose of the study is to explore how regular music programming in rural South-Central Manitoba can be designed to foster engagement in singing in grade 3 boys. The study will explore the following questions:

1. How does involvement in the selection of music repertoire and activities impact grade 3 boys' engagement in singing?
2. How does incorporating topics of student interest into singing activities impact grade 3 boys' engagement in singing?
3. What accompaniment instruments positively influence engagement in singing for grade 3 boys?
4. How does a psychomotor approach to teaching singing influence grade 3 boys' engagement in singing?
5. How do male role models influence grade 3 boys' engagement in singing?

An **engaged singer** shows interest in the materials being taught and actively sings with their whole body. They focus on the task at hand (rather than other students or objects in the room), watch and follow the directions of the director/teacher, sit or stand in a way that supports the breath, actively produce sound using the body's singing mechanism, and use their faces and eyes to express the emotions in the music (Phillips, 1992). Time seems to go quickly because the singer is enjoying the experience.

Phillips, K. H. (1992). *Teaching kids to sing*. New York, NY: Schirmer Books.

Why this topic?

I have a vested personal interest in singing as a form of self-expression, communication, community building and a way to learn about other people and parts of the world. I also have a vested interest in choral programs in Manitoba and have worked actively with the Central Manitoba Choral Association to promote singing and choirs in Central Manitoba and specifically the community of [REDACTED].

The number of boys in choirs all across this region and community are significantly lower than girls. I feel that singing knows no gender bias and that all people should feel welcomed into the singing process. Throughout my research I have learned that there are many factors tied to male identity and singing that can have an impact on their participation in choirs.

I have found that grade 3 is a year in which boys become self-conscious about singing. This is also a year in which peer opinions become very important to my male students. My ultimate goal is that boys will feel capable and willing to keep singing through elementary and high school. I believe that building positive singing experiences in grade 3 will help to promote this.

What will the study look like?

The study will be incorporated into regularly scheduled grade 3 and 2/3 music classes. It will take place in a mixed-gender context. Although only grade 3 boys will be studied, grade 3 girls and grade 2 students in grade 2/3 will also participate and have input in all classroom activities. It is anticipated that this study will take place from October 2018-May 2019.

Data (**research information**) will be generated in the following ways:

- I will administer **two surveys** at the beginning of the study to gather information about grade 3 and 2/3 students' personal learning interests and musical preferences. This will influence the songs that are selected for teaching and learning in grade 3 general music for the remainder of the study. The surveys will be trialled with grade 4 and 5 students to determine any changes that should be made to the administration of the surveys to grade 3 and 2/3 students.
- I will keep a **journal** to reflect on the research questions over the course of the study.
- **Class discussions** about the findings of the research will take place to include students in the interpretation of the findings.
- **Peer interviews** will be administered at the end of the study to give grade 3 and 2/3 students the opportunity to express how this year's music programming has impacted their feelings and attitudes towards music class and singing.

Data will only be generated from students whose parents sign the appropriate consent forms, specifying that students may leave the study at any time. Data generated will be protected, as well as the identities of students involved in the study.

As well as selecting songs that appeal to preferences and interests of students, I intend to incorporate a number of research-based strategies into grade 3 and 2/3 music programming including:

- More movement-based singing activities
- Incorporation of humour through silly songs
- A psychomotor approach to singing- teaching children how their physical bodies work to create speech and singing
- Promotion of whole-school singing experiences
- Providing examples of male and female singers, both live and recorded
- Reaching out to the community to bring singing parents and friends into the music classroom
- Fostering student creativity through composition activities that involve technology and the singing voice

Who benefits?**Students**

The changes to programming influenced by this study are intended to help improve the learning of all students in Grade 3 and 2/3 Music and foster a love of music-making and singing.

My teaching practices

What I learn through this study will help to support and improve my teaching practices at every grade level, creating more positive learning experiences for all.

Middle years and high school music programs

Creating more positive experiences in music class will hopefully encourage and inspire students to continue to pursue music at the middle years and high school level.

Other educators

Upon the completion of this project, I hope to share the findings with other educators in the form of presentations and research articles so that they may try the successful strategies with their students.

APPENDIX O- PRINCIPAL'S AUTHORIZATION FOR A SCHOOL TO SERVE IN A
RESEARCH STUDY

Melissa Spraggs

[REDACTED]

December 16, 2018

Principal

[REDACTED]

School

Dear Principal:

In accordance with Brandon University Research Ethics Committee's guidelines, I am required to obtain written consent authorizing [REDACTED] School's participation in a research study. On the following pages, you will find information summarizing my research project. Please read the statements of understanding and indicate your understanding by signing, dating, and returning the form at your earliest convenience. By signing and dating this form, you grant permission for the study to move forward. A second copy of this form has been included for your records.

Thank you for your support of this project.

Sincerely,



Melissa Spraggs

Project Title: Shifts in Regular Music Programming: Engaging Grade 3 Boys in the Singing Process

Researcher: Mrs. Melissa Spraggs

Employment Affiliation: Music Teacher, [REDACTED]

Phone Number: (204) [REDACTED] at [REDACTED] School, [REDACTED]

Supervising University Professor: Dr. Sheila Scott, Brandon University School of Music

Purpose of the study: The purpose of the study is to explore how regular music programming in rural South-Central Manitoba can be designed to foster engagement in singing in grade 3 boys.

Procedures to be followed: The study will be incorporated into regularly scheduled grade 3 and 2/3 music classes. It will take place in a mixed-gender context. Data (research information) from male and female students will be generated and collected.

The final research report will only contain data generated by students whose parents sign the appropriate consent forms, specifying that students may withdraw participation in the study (see attached). Data generated will be protected, as well as the identities of students involved in the study. To protect student identities, the names of [REDACTED] School and [REDACTED] School Division will not be used in the final research report.

Data will be generated in the following ways:

- The researcher will administer **two surveys** at the beginning of the study to gather information about grade 3 and 2/3 students' personal learning interests and musical preferences. This will influence the songs that are selected for teaching and learning in grade 3 general music for the remainder of the study. Prior to its administration, one of these surveys will be reviewed by a panel of music teacher reviewers to determine its' appropriateness and effectiveness for its intended use.
- The researcher will keep a **journal** to reflect on the research questions over the course of the study.
- **Group discussions** about the findings of the research will take place to include students in the interpretation of the findings.
- **Peer interviews** will be administered at the end of the study to give grade 3 and 2/3 students the opportunity to express how this year's music programming has impacted their feelings and attitudes towards music class and singing.

As well as selecting songs that appeal to preferences and interests of students, the researcher intends to incorporate a number of research-based strategies into grade 3 and 2/3 music programming including:

- More movement-based singing activities;
- Incorporation of humour through silly songs;
- A psychomotor approach to singing- teaching children how their physical bodies work to create speech and singing;
- Promotion of whole-school singing experiences;

- Providing examples of male and female singers, both live and recorded;
- Reaching out to the community to bring singing parents and friends into the music classroom;
- Fostering student creativity through composition activities that involve technology and the singing voice.

Time and duration of the study: January 2019 to June 2019

Benefits of the study:

Students will benefit from greater engagement in singing and music classes. Learning that takes place through this study will help to support and improve the researcher's teaching practices at every grade level, creating more positive learning experiences for all students at [REDACTED] School. Creating more positive experiences in music class will hopefully encourage and inspire students to continue to pursue music at the middle years and high school level. Findings from the study will also help to benefit other educators when the successful strategies are shared by the researcher.

Persons who will have access to the records, data, or other documentation: The researcher, school administration and grade 3 teachers (where appropriate), researcher's critical friend

Statements of Understanding:

I understand that participation in this project is voluntary, and I understand that a parent or guardian may withdraw his/her child from this study until June 30, 2019 by notifying the researcher.

I understand that participation of the students in this project is confidential. Only the researcher will have access to the students' identities and to information that can be associated with their identities. Where appropriate, classroom teachers and school administration may have access to the students' identities and to information that can be associated with their identities.

I understand that the names of the school and school division will not be shared in the dissemination of study results.

Please check the appropriate box below and sign the form:

- ☐ I give permission for my school to participate in this project. I understand that I will receive a copy of this consent form for my records. I have read and understand the form.
- ☐ I do not give permission for my school to participate in this project.

Signature of Principal

Date

APPENDIX P- SUPERINTENDENT'S AUTHORIZATION FOR A SCHOOL TO SERVE IN
A RESEARCH STUDY

Melissa Spraggs



December 16, 2018

Superintendent



School Division

Dear Superintendent:

In accordance with Brandon University Research Ethics Committee's guidelines, I am required to obtain written consent authorizing [REDACTED] School's participation in a research study. On the following pages, you will find information summarizing my research project. Please read the statements of understanding and indicate your understanding by signing, dating, and returning the form at your earliest convenience. By signing and dating this form, you grant permission for the study to move forward. A second copy of this form has been included for your records.

Thank you for your support of this project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "MSpraggs".

Melissa Spraggs

Project Title: Shifts in Regular Music Programming: Engaging Grade 3 Boys in the Singing Process

Researcher: Mrs. Melissa Spraggs

Employment Affiliation: Music Teacher, [REDACTED] School

Phone Number: [REDACTED] at [REDACTED] School, [REDACTED]

Supervising University Professor: Dr. Sheila Scott, Brandon University School of Music

Purpose of the study: The purpose of the study is to explore how regular music programming in rural South-Central Manitoba can be designed to foster engagement in singing in grade 3 boys.

Procedures to be followed: The study will be incorporated into regularly scheduled grade 3 and 2/3 music classes. It will take place in a mixed-gender context. Data (research information) from male and female students will be generated and collected.

The final research report will only contain data generated by students whose parents sign the appropriate consent forms, specifying that students may withdraw participation in the study (see attached). Data generated will be protected, as well as the identities of students involved in the study. To protect student identities, the names of [REDACTED] School and [REDACTED] School Division will not be used in the final research report.

Data will be generated in the following ways:

- The researcher will administer **two surveys** at the beginning of the study to gather information about grade 3 and 2/3 students' personal learning interests and musical preferences. This will influence the songs that are selected for teaching and learning in grade 3 general music for the remainder of the study. Prior to its administration, one of these surveys will be reviewed by a panel of music teacher reviewers to determine its' appropriateness and effectiveness for its intended use.
- The researcher will keep a **journal** to reflect on the research questions over the course of the study.
- **Group discussions** about the findings of the research will take place to include students in the interpretation of the findings.
- **Peer interviews** will be administered at the end of the study to give grade 3 and 2/3 students the opportunity to express how this year's music programming has impacted their feelings and attitudes towards music class and singing.

As well as selecting songs that appeal to preferences and interests of students, the researcher intends to incorporate a number of research-based strategies into grade 3 and 2/3 music programming including:

- More movement-based singing activities;
- Incorporation of humour through silly songs;
- A psychomotor approach to singing- teaching children how their physical bodies work to create speech and singing;
- Promotion of whole-school singing experiences;

- Providing examples of male and female singers, both live and recorded;
- Reaching out to the community to bring singing parents and friends into the music classroom;
- Fostering student creativity through composition activities that involve technology and the singing voice.

Time and duration of the study: January 2019 to June 2019

Benefits of the study:

Students will benefit from greater engagement in singing and music classes. Learning that takes place through this study will help to support and improve the researcher's teaching practices at every grade level, creating more positive learning experiences for all students at [REDACTED] School. Creating more positive experiences in music class will hopefully encourage and inspire students to continue to pursue music at the middle years and high school level. Findings from the study will also help to benefit other educators when the successful strategies are shared by the researcher.

Persons who will have access to the records, data, or other documentation: The researcher, school administration and grade 3 teachers (where appropriate), researcher's critical friend

Statements of Understanding:

I understand that participation in this project is voluntary, and I understand that a parent or guardian may withdraw his/her child from this study at any time by notifying the researcher.

I understand that participation of the students in this project is confidential. Only the researcher will have access to the students' identities and to information that can be associated with their identities. Where appropriate, classroom teachers and school administration may have access to the students' identities and to information that can be associated with their identities.

I understand that the names of the school and school division will not be shared in the dissemination of study results.

Please check the appropriate box below and sign the form:

- ☐ I give permission for [REDACTED] School to participate in this project. I understand that I will receive a copy of this consent form for my records. I have read and understand the form.
- ☐ I do not give permission for my school to participate in this project.

Signature of Superintendent

Date

APPENDIX Q- REVIEWER FEEDBACK AND CHANGES TO SECTION 1 OF THE MLP II

Original Question	Fitting/Not Fitting	Feedback from Reviewers	Question on Final MLP II	Researcher Justification
1. Who is your favourite singer/band?	Fitting- 6 Not fitting- 0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Is it possible some will not have a favourite singer for religious reasons or lack of technology in the home?</i> - <i>My Grade 3 level students find it hard to remember names.</i> - <i>In grade 2/3, they may not know "who" - will this conflict with your results? Perhaps this could be changed to: Do you have a favourite band? If so, who?</i> - <i>Change the word singer to artist and then verbally clarify.</i> - <i>Incorporate choice questions in which students can circle their answer.</i> 	<p>Do you have a favourite singer or band?</p> <p>Circle : YES NO</p> <p>If yes, please write the name.</p>	<p>Rather than assuming students have a favourite singer or band, I changed the question to ask whether students have a favourite singer or band. The opportunity to circle "yes" or "no" was added.</p> <p>The opportunity to write the name of a favourite singer or band was also added. If students could not remember, the question could be left blank.</p> <p>I did not change the word singer to artist as the language may have been confusing for the grade 3 and 2/3 students under study.</p>
2. What is your favourite song?	Fitting- 6 Not fitting- 0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>My grade 3 level students find it hard to remember names.</i> - <i>In grade 2/3, they may not be able to choose their favourite- will this conflict with your</i> 	<p>Do you have a favourite song?</p> <p>Circle: YES NO</p> <p>If yes, please write the name.</p>	<p>Rather than assuming students have a favourite song, I changed the question to ask if students have a favourite song. The opportunity to circle "yes" or</p>

		<p><i>results? Perhaps this could be changed to: Do you have a favourite song? If so, which one?</i></p> <p><i>- Incorporate choice questions in which students can circle their answer.</i></p>		<p>“no” was added. The opportunity to write the name of a song was also added. If students could not remember the song title, the question could be left blank.</p>
3. If we could sing one song in music class, what song would you choose?	Fitting- 6 Not fitting- 0	<p><i>- I wonder if you need to say from radio, YouTube etc.- not only music class songs</i></p>	If we could sing one song in music class, what song would you choose?	I did not add specifics about where students had previously heard songs, in order to give them the freedom to suggest songs from any area of their lives.
4. What style of music do you listen to at home, in the car, at a sports game, or with your family? Write artist of band names if you remember them.	Fitting- 5 Not fitting- 1	<p><i>- There are too many scenarios and student reactions will be dependent on context (i.e. Did their sports team win or lose? Are they just watching the game? What are they doing at home [trying to sleep, clean, eat]?) I think questions 1-3 cover musical preferences well. Is #4 necessary?</i></p> <p><i>- I still have grade 3's who do not understand “style of music”, so perhaps style/type/kind?</i></p>	<p>Do you listen to music outside of school?</p> <p>Circle : YES NO</p> <p>If yes, write singer/band or radio station names.</p>	<p>These changes eliminate the word “style”, while still allowing students the opportunity write about a style if they have the knowledge.</p> <p>Asking for radio station names gave me the same information as students writing about specific styles of music.</p> <p>Scenarios were eliminated from the question because of reviewer concerns about clarity. Also, student activities outside of school are likely more</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Perhaps separate this into three different questions: 1) in the car, 2) at home, 3) at a sports game. - They may not be able to articulate “style”, but perhaps give you a radio station from the car. - This is different terminology from #1. I would suggest keeping them the same (singer or artist). 		<p>diverse than only three settings.</p> <p>This question was rewritten in the same style as questions 1 and 2, giving students the opportunity to circle their answer.</p> <p>The word “artist” was changed to “singer” to be consistent with wording in question #1.</p>
5. What musical activities do you take part in outside of school (music lessons, dance, choirs, singing or playing instruments with your family or friends, none)?	Fitting- 6 Not fitting- 0	- Incorporate choice questions in which students can circle their answer.	<p>What musical activities do you take part in outside of school? Please circle:</p> <p>Music lessons</p> <p>Dance</p> <p>Choirs</p> <p>Other: _____</p> <p>Singing or playing instruments with your family or friends</p> <p>None</p>	For ease of use, this question was presented in a form where students could circle the activities in which they take part outside of school.

6. In your homeroom, what is your favourite thing to learn about?	Fitting- 6 Not fitting- 0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>My students don't call it "homeroom", but this could be changed to suit each school.</i> - <i>In your classroom...(not many elementary students call it "homeroom")</i> - <i>Students may interpret this as a question about their favourite subject in school.</i> 	What is your favourite thing to learn about?	<p>Due to disagreement on wording between some reviewers and myself, I removed terminology referring to learning in one specific space.</p> <p>The term homeroom has been used throughout the study to provide a clear distinction between the music classroom and their homeroom (which is also a classroom).</p>
7. What do you enjoy reading about?	Fitting- 6 Not fitting- 0	All reviewers agreed that this question was fitting for grade 3 students.	What do you enjoy reading about?	No changes were needed.
8. What do you like to do when you are not at school?	Fitting- 5 No response- 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>I would ask them to be more specific. Otherwise, most will answer "watch YouTube". Instead, you may want to know what videos interest them.</i> 	What do you like to do when you are not at school?	I did not feel that this question sought to discover what kind of videos interest grade 3 students. It sought to create a picture of general interests outside of school, so I did not change the wording of the question.

Additional feedback for Section 1	Researcher response
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Incorporate visuals/graphics/clipart to go with each question to help explain.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To aid students with lower writing capabilities, students were instructed that they could write word answers or draw pictures. I did not insert visuals to help explain every question, but instead was available to help further explain questions to students who did not understand.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Incorporate choice questions (circle the pictures that represent the answer).</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Questions 1, 2, 4 and 5 were adapted to allow students the opportunity to circle their answers.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Perhaps you could include a question that asks students to identify their culture. This may have an impact on some of their musical preferences and understanding of the questions. Some students may not realize that they can list a favourite artist, band, or song from their country/cultural background.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Due to the cultures in the school being fairly homogenous, students were not asked to identify their culture. I verbally explained that answers could represent any area of each students' life, including their cultural background.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Many grade 2 and 3 students might find the longer questions difficult to answer, even with the teacher reading the questions. Maybe questions 4 and 5 could be divided into multiple questions?</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To make questions 4 and 5 more accessible to the students under study, they were rewritten with simpler wording and the opportunity to circle answers.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>The survey is likely a little long for some grade 3's.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I did not add any more questions.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>You could ask, "In music class, what kind of singing activities do you like best? Singing games/partner songs/canons/choir or playing the xylophone?"</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - These questions were covered in the MAPI, so they were not added to the MLP II.

APPENDIX R- REVIEWER FEEDBACK AND CHANGES TO SECTION 2 OF THE MLP II

Style Example	Appropriate/Not Appropriate	Suggestions for Alternate Songs	Changes	Researcher Justification
1. Country “Alberta Bound” by Paul Brandt	Appropriate- 6 Not Appropriate- 0	None	No changes	All six reviewers found the chosen example appropriate, so it was kept the same.
2. Popular “Symphony” by Clean Bandit featuring Zara Larsson	Appropriate- 6 Not Appropriate- 0	“I Like it Like That (Radio Edit)” by Cardi B	No changes	All six reviewers found the chosen example to be appropriate, so it was kept the same. The suggestion for an alternate song does not fit within the rationale of song selection as it would not be appropriate for grade 3 students to sing.
3. Rock “More Than a Feeling” by Boston	Appropriate- 5 Not Appropriate- 1	“We Will Rock You” by Queen Burton Cummings	Changed to “We Will Rock You” by Queen	Since not all reviewers were in agreement about the appropriateness of “More Than a Feeling” by Boston, I changed the example to the suggested song “We Will Rock You” by Queen. It is a strong example which features rock instrumentation and singing style.

4. Disney “How Far I’ll Go” from Moana	Appropriate- 6 Not Appropriate- 0	“Let it Go” from Frozen “A Whole New World” from Aladdin “Reflection” from Mulan “I See the Light” from Tangled	No changes	All of the suggested examples are similar to the example already in the survey. No teachers found the given example inappropriate, so it remained the same.
5. Canadian Folk “Canadian Railroad Trilogy” by Gordon Lightfoot	Appropriate- 5 Not appropriate- 1	“Donkey Riding” by Great Big Sea “Northwest Passage” by Stan Rogers “I’ll Bend but I Won’t Break” by Red Moon Road Great Big Sea (East Coast Folk)	Changed to “Donkey Riding” by Great Big Sea	One reviewer felt that the chosen example was not appropriate. Great Big Sea was suggested by two separate reviewers, therefore the example was changed to “Donkey Riding” by Great Big Sea.
6. Canadian Indigenous “One Drum” by Leila Gilday	Appropriate- 6 Not Appropriate- 0	“We Are All One People” by Joseph Naytowhow “O Siem” by Susan Aglukark “Wehayo” by Asani “Ukiuq” by The Jerry Cans	No changes	All six reviewers found the chosen example appropriate, so it was kept the same. The chosen example was one of the reviewer’s examples of a female voice and featured a mixture of Indigenous chant and English singing. None of the suggested songs met these criteria.

7. Jazz “Orange-Colored Sky” by Nat King Cole	Appropriate- 6 Not Appropriate- 0	“What a Wonderful World” by Louis Armstrong “The Pink Panther” by Henri Mancini “Take 5” by Dave Brubeck *Suggestion to cut right before the dialogue*	Example was cut right before the dialogue	All six reviewers found the chosen example appropriate, so it was kept the same. “The Pink Panther” and “Take Five” are both instrumental examples and do not fit within the my criteria for a song that includes singing. The dialogue at the end of the example was removed to keep the focus on the singing in the music.
8. Music of Syria “Lama Bada” by Constantinople	Appropriate- 6 Not Appropriate- 0	None	No changes	All six reviewers found the chosen example appropriate, so it was kept the same.
9. Mariachi (Mexico) “La Bamba” by various artists	Appropriate- 6 Not Appropriate- 0	“Cielito Lindo”	No changes	All six reviewers found the chosen example appropriate, so it was kept the same.
10. Music of Eritrea “Numey” by Faytinga	Appropriate- 6 Not Appropriate- 0	None	No changes	All six reviewers found the chosen example appropriate, so it was kept the same.

11. Music of the Phillippines “Makaugnay” by Joey Ayala and Bakong Lumad	Appropriate- 6 Not Appropriate- 0	None	No changes	All six reviewers found the chosen example appropriate, so it was kept the same.
Additional Feedback		Researcher Response		
<i>Suggestion to not list the genre on the survey itself so students do not have any preconceived notions of whether or not they like the song.</i>		I removed the names of the styles on the survey administered to the students, leaving only the numbers of each example.		
<i>Suggestion to have two listening sections-one that lists the genre and one without.</i>		Due to the current duration of the survey and considering the attention spans of grade 3 students, I made the decision to not add any more sections or listening examples.		
<i>Also include: hip-hop, rap, classical, heavy rock, electronic, and smooth jazz.</i>				
<i>More samples of each style</i>				

APPENDIX S- RATIONALES FOR SONG SELECTION IN MLP II SECTION 2

9. Country. This style emerged around the 1920's in North America (Neal, 2014).

The origins of country music are the folk music of mostly white, working-class Americans, who blended popular songs, Irish and Celtic fiddle tunes, traditional ballads, and cowboy songs, along with African American blues and various musical traditions from European immigrant communities. (Neal, p. 1)

Themes of this style include rural ideas and a celebration of working-class identity.

Instruments often featured in country music are fiddle, acoustic guitar, banjo, and steel slide guitar. Vocal quality can be described as nasal and twangy, and country song-writing often emphasizes storytelling and narratives (Neal).

“Alberta Bound” by Paul Brandt (male). Canadian country artist Paul Brandt sings about the Canadian province of Alberta. I chose this song because it features instrumentation typically associated with country music. The singing style is twangy and the lyrics embrace rural ideas (as mentioned above).

10. Popular (Pop). Popular music is commonly referred to as *pop*. It is a genre that is difficult to describe as it is continually changing and evolving. According to Middleton and Manuel (2015), “Its meaning has shifted historically... and often varies in different cultures” (p. 1). In my music classes, I describe popular music as music that is popular in a specific culture at a specific point in time. In this survey, *pop music* refers to popular music in North America.

The popularity of music is often indicated by its consumption by the public and can be measured by counting sales of a specific song recording. Popular music is often

distributed through the technologies of mass media, including sheet music, recording, radio, and film (Middleton & Manuel, 2015). Instrumentation for popular music often includes guitars, autotuned vocals, and electronic instruments.

“Symphony” by Clean Bandit featuring Zara Larsson (female). I chose this song because it is a recent pop example; it reached its peak position on Billboard in August, 2017 (Billboard, 2018). It has been played on pop music radio, so some of my students may have heard it previously. It features appropriate lyrics for grade 3 and 2/3 students, autotuned vocals, and electronic instruments.

11. Rock. This style of music began in the 1950’s (at that time referred to as *rock’ n’ roll*).

“*Rock’ n’ roll* was grounded in the white consumption and appropriation of black rhythm and blues, a style of music not consumed by older generations and which was considered dangerous and inappropriate for whites, especially for the middle class” (Fast, 2014, p. 1). Rock was produced using electric instruments and was often described as loud and unruly music. Rebelling against social expectations was significant to the first musicians and consumers of *rock’ n’ roll* and remains an important characteristic of rock music. A typical rock band includes a guitar, bass guitar, drum kit, and singer. Keyboards, horns, and synthesizers may also be used (Fast).

“We Will Rock You” by Queen (male). I chose this song because it features the typical rock band instrumentation mentioned above. The lyrics are appropriate for grade 3 and 2/3 students. It was also recommended by one of the teacher reviewers.

12. Disney. Disney Studios began producing movies in 1937 with *Snow White* (Walt Disney Studios) which became very popular with child audiences. The songs sung by

the characters in these animated films were intended to enhance the storylines. Disney Studios continue to produce animated and computer-animated movies to the current day (Disney-Pixar, 2018). The melodic story-telling in this style is similar to that in musical theatre, which has not been included as its own category in this survey.

“How Far I’ll Go” from *Moana* (female). Disney’s *Moana* was released in 2016 (IMDb, 2018). This computer-animated movie tells its story through spoken word and song. I chose “How Far I’ll Go” because of my students’ familiarity with the movie.

13. Canadian Folk. Folk music is commonly described as *music of the folks*. Its definition varies within different geographical locations and in different historical periods (Pegg, 2001). Instruments vary depending on region and historical period. For this survey, I have decided to focus on Canadian folk music, which commonly includes acoustic instrumentation including guitars, violins/fiddles, vocals, and other stringed instruments (such as banjos, ukuleles, and mandolins).

“Donkey Riding” by Great Big Sea (male). I chose this song because the band is a well-known Canadian folk group. This group was recommended by multiple teacher reviewers. This song represents *music of the folks* (the people on the East Coast of Canada) and the instrumentation is typical of Canadian folk music.

14. Canadian Indigenous. Indigenous or Aboriginal people (First Nations, Inuit, Métis) of Canada practice diverse cultural traditions that are reflected in a variety of musical forms. Different nations have their own stylistic traditions for singing. Songs may be sung in an Aboriginal language, English, or French and may be sung for social or ceremonial purposes. Social music primarily consists of group singing accompanied by

drums and rattles, and may accompany dances for gatherings and celebrations.

Ceremonial music is primarily vocal music accompanied by percussion and may only be performed in the context of a ceremony. Song melodies may be sung on vocables (syllables that do not translate to a specific word) or a combination of text and vocables (Hoefnagels, 2015).

Many contemporary Aboriginal musicians incorporate elements of non-Indigenous music in their songs. They may also incorporate lyrics, instruments, and singing styles that reflect their Indigenous culture (Hoefnagels, 2015).

“One Drum” by Leela Gilday (female). Based out of Yellowknife, NWT, Gilday is a member of the Dene nation (Gilday, 2018). I chose this song because it demonstrates some elements of traditional First Nations songs through the use of chant and vocables. It also features the English language. The message of unity in the song is appropriate for young listeners and the melody would be accessible for young people to sing.

15. Jazz. This style originated around 1900 in the southern United States (around New Orleans) and “drew widespread notice” around 1920 (Tucker & Jackson, 2001, p. 3).

Jazz can have many purposes, including use as background music, accompanying dancing, or encouraging reflection and analysis. Typical jazz instrumentation may include but is not limited to drums, upright bass, vocals, saxophones, trumpets, and piano. This style of music often features syncopated rhythms (Tucker & Jackson).

“While jazz is a product of black American expressive culture, it has always been open to musical influences from other traditions and since the 1920s has been performed by musicians of varying backgrounds throughout the world” (Tucker & Jackson, p. 2).

“Orange-Colored Sky” by Nat King Cole (male). I chose this example because Nat King Cole is a celebrated African-American jazz vocalist. The song features a broad spectrum of jazz instrumentation (brass instruments, piano, voices, upright bass, drums), as well as syncopated rhythms typical of the jazz style.

16. Music of Syria. The classical and folk music of Syria features Arabic poetic texts and is often sung in a solo melismatic style (Hassan, 2001). Often “the poetic texts are as important as the music itself” (Hassan, p. 3). Some songs are performed in free or semi-improvisatory style. Instruments used in Syrian music are the *‘ud* (short-necked lute), *qanun* (trapezoid table zither), *nay* (end blown flute), *darbuka* (goblet drum), *daff* (frame drum), *mizwaj* (single and double clarinets), and *tabl* (cylindrical drum) (Hassan).

“Lamma Bada” by Constantinople (female). This ancient secular Syrian song (Thiesen, 2010) features a 10th Century poem about attraction to a loved one’s beauty (Clark, 2009). I chose this song because it is sung in the solo melismatic style and features many of the traditional Syrian instruments mentioned above.

17. Mariachi (Mexico). Mariachi is a musical tradition that originated in western Mexico. It is associated with the states of Jalisco, Colima, Michoacán, Aguascalientes, Guanajuato, Guerrero, Nayarit, and Zacatecas. A mariachi ensemble traditionally includes trumpet, violin, vihuela, guitar, and guitarrón (Henriques, 2014). Many of these instruments are descendants of instruments brought to Mexico by Spanish and Portuguese explorers (Thomas, 2011).

“La Bamba” performed by various artists (male). I chose this song example because it represents the full-bodied vocal style of a Mariachi band. It is sung in the

Spanish language and the text speaks of performing a Mexican dance (LyricsTranslate, 2018). The song features the traditional instruments of a mariachi ensemble listed above. Because of its repetitive text, this is a song that could be learned and performed by children.

18. Music of Eritrea. Eritrean secular songs are influenced by Ethiopian, Sudanese, and Italian musics. They are typically sung using interval sets of six pitches. Vocal style variations include vocal slides, glissandos, ornaments, and overlapping melodic lines between vocal and/or instrumental accompaniment. Improvisation (text and melody) and interplay between rhythm and meter give the music a unique quality (Kimberlin, 2013). “Vocal and instrumental parts often exhibit different metres and melodic variants that are linked by an obvious or implied timeline” (Kimberlin, p. 2). Eritrean instrumentation includes the *oud* (short neck lute), *wata* (bass lute), *darabouka* (goblet drum), bamboo and metal end-blown flutes, *krar* (lyre), *kebero* (double-barrelled cylindrical drum), tambourine, and *dube* (onesided, bowl-shaped drum) (Kimberlin; Faytinga, 2018).

“**Numey**” by Faytinga (female). Sung in the Kunama African language, Numey (Don’t Interrupt the Teller), demonstrates the vocal slides and ornaments commonly found in Eritrean music. I chose this song because it allows the students to clearly hear the Eritrean vocal style and demonstrates overlapping melodic lines between vocal and/or instrumental parts. The wata and tambourine are Eritrean instruments featured in this song (Faytinga, 2018).

19. Music of the Philippines. Music of the Philippines is influenced by the music of indigenous Philippine cultures, Spain, America, and Western classical music. It is often

performed in English, Tagalog, or another indigenous language (Maceda et al., 2013).

Tagalog, also referred to as Filipino, is the national language of the Philippines that was brought to the country thousands of years ago by the people of Southeast Asia (Lingholic, 2016).

“Makaugnay” by Joey Ayala and Bagong Lumad (male). Sung in Tagalog, the song text discusses the connection between all things (Lyricsmode, 2018) and is appropriate for young singers. The accompaniment utilizes indigenous folk instruments including *hegalong* (two String lute), and *kubing* (jew’s harp), as well as electric guitar, bass, and drums (Maceda et al., 2013). I chose this song because it brings popular singing style together with indigenous instruments, representing music from many different parts of the country.

APPENDIX T- CHOSEN REPERTOIRE, DESCRIPTIONS, AND JUSTIFICATIONS

1. **“Letters and Shapes”** (Kriske & DeLelles, 2007). This is a movement game that incorporates rhythmic speech. I chose this activity because it had been a favourite game for groups of students in the past and met many students’ need for movement. It also encouraged collaboration.

In the A Section, students move around the room to a drum pattern in 6/8 time, speaking a rhyme about letters and shapes. At the end of the rhyme, the name of a letter or shape (square, circle, octagon etc.) is called out and students create the letter or shape with their bodies. They can work individually or in a small group. A competitive element can be added to the game, where a winning “most creative” group or individual is chosen to select the next shape and choose the winner of the next round.

This activity was used as a movement game following singing activities. I would motivate students by saying, “If we complete our singing activities, we will play a game”. In most classes, especially class 3S, students would work hard to complete their singing activities so they could play this game.

Students were actively engaged in making shapes with their bodies. Not all students actively engaged in the rhythmic speech. This may have been due to lack of familiarity with the text. Also, the words are spoken while students move around the room. From previous experience working with this age group, I have learned that moving and speaking simultaneously can be difficult for some students.

2. **“Oh When the Saints”** (Kriske & DeLelles, 2007). This is a singing and movement game. I chose this song because it had been a favourite game for groups of students in the

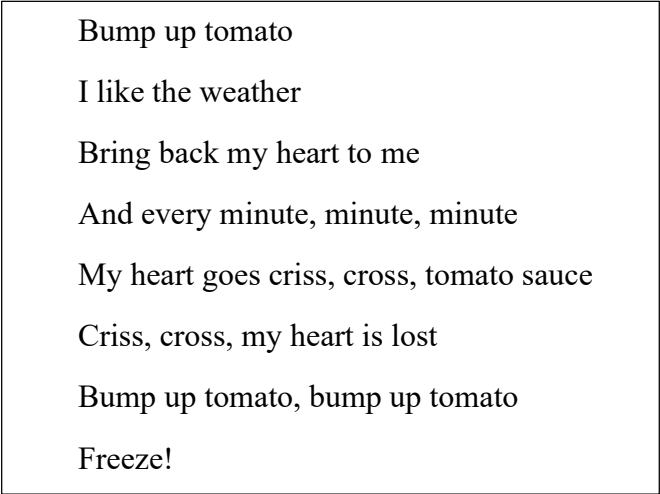
past and met many students' need for movement. It also encouraged collaboration and contained a competitive element.

In the A Section, students march around the room and sing "Oh When the Saints" to an upbeat piano accompaniment. In the B Section, the teacher calls out a number (typically between 1 and 6) and the students must get into groups comprised of that number. Those who do not make it into a group are "out" and become callers at the piano. They call out the number of students per group in the following rounds until the groups can no longer get any smaller. The remaining students are the winners of the game. Winners are celebrated by their classmates through a round of applause.

Students enjoyed the competitive part of the game when they were required to get into groups with a specified number of students. After a number of repetitions, many students sang the song with *gusto* (confidence and volume), as highlighted in my journal. Not all students engaged in the singing portion of the song, but all students engaged actively in the competitive portion. In my journal, I reflected that I would use this activity in the future as a way to engage students in singing.

3. **"Bump Up Tomato"** (traditional American camp song). This singing game, shared with me by a friend, was quite popular with the students. I chose this activity because it is similar to the camp game "Honey if you Love Me" that I had played and enjoyed as a child. "Honey if you Love Me" was also suggested by Baldock (2009). In "Honey if You Love Me", the person who is "it" approaches individuals in the room and says, "Honey, if you love me, won't you please, please smile." Those being approached try to keep a straight face. If someone smiles, they become "it". "Bump Up Tomato" felt like a more age appropriate version of this game for the students under study. It eliminated the need to

call someone “Honey”, which can be quite embarrassing for young students. In the past, I found that the word love was not always received positively by grade 3 students, especially males. The lyrics to “Bump Up Tomato” do not include the word love or require students to call someone “Honey”. It keeps the smiling component, while using more child appropriate lyrics. See the lyrics to the A Section in Figure 6 below:



Bump up tomato
I like the weather
Bring back my heart to me
And every minute, minute, minute
My heart goes criss, cross, tomato sauce
Criss, cross, my heart is lost
Bump up tomato, bump up tomato
Freeze!

Figure 6. Lyrics to the A Section of “Bump Up Tomato”.

Students clap while singing these words. At the end of the A Section, the students say, “Freeze!” and then try to keep their faces very still. A selected student (the student who is “it”) goes around the circle and tries to make a classmate smile. If a classmate smiles, they become “it”.

In this game, students enjoyed the challenge of trying to make one another smile. The person who was “it” came up with new creative ways to make their classmates smile and many students asked for a turn to be “it”. When someone finally smiled, the whole class erupted into laughter. This was a game that students asked to play over and over again. Most students actively engaged in the singing and clapping portion of the song.

4. **“Billy”** (Brummitt & Choksy, 1987). I chose this singing game because it incorporates a very active movement component. It resulted in much laughter from the students. I found that explaining the movement patterns only worked well with attentive groups of students, therefore I did not attempt this song with all classes under study. Classes 3S and 3J learned this song as I felt they would be able to attend long enough to understand the instructions. The students had not yet learned a song that incorporated an “alley” formation (students stand in two rows facing one another), so teaching the song required more time and patience than anticipated.

Students did not always actively engage in the singing portion of the song, but enjoyed doing their own movements with a partner down the “alley”. I think the lack of student singing may have been due to the difficulty some students have with moving and singing simultaneously. The combination of continuous activity and continuous singing put strain on my voice when few students joined in the singing, as I had to sing louder than normal without any breaks. I reflected in my journal that this game was not an effective way to engage all students in singing. Since students enjoyed the movement part of this activity so much, I would recommend this song as a movement activity. I also recommend recording the sung portion of the song to be played during the activity in order to save the teacher’s voice.

5. **“Captain Don’t Side Track Your Train”** (Kriske & DeLelles, 2007). This song was chosen to teach singing patterns in a minor mode, an outcome set out in the Manitoba Music Curriculum (Government of Manitoba, 2011). I had also experienced success teaching this song to grade 3 students in the past. In *GamePlan 3* (Kriske & DeLelles), an instrument rotation is suggested to accompany this song. In an instrument rotation,

students learn multiple instrument parts. These parts are played simultaneously and groups of students rotate through the parts, playing a different part on each repetition of the song. The students under study did not demonstrate that they were ready to participate in an instrument rotation with this song. They learned one instrument part before moving on to new repertoire. I made the decision to move on because students were not as actively engaged in this piece of music as they had been with other songs in the study. Students lacked enthusiasm and did not participate actively in the learning of the song or the instrument part. Many students stopped listening and displayed disruptive behaviours. Some students commented about the abundance of train songs we had learned already this school year, so it is likely that they had grown tired of this theme. Students may have responded differently if this had been the first time they were introduced to this theme.

6. **“Ama Lama”** (Kriske & DeLelles, 2007 with a rhythmic variation). In Feedback Loop #1, students had expressed how they enjoyed singing “weird and funny” words. I chose this song because it features many non-sense and unexpected words, which the students found to be weird and funny. When learning this song, some students claimed that the words looked too difficult, yet with clear vocal modelling they learned them successfully. This song offered the students an adequate amount of challenge. It also gave students the opportunity to sing a song in compound time.

“Ama Lama” was used to assess individual singing in a minor key. Students sang and presented the accompanying movement pattern with a partner. They took turns singing individually, phrase by phrase. Students were given time to practice with their partner. They were invited to present the song to the teacher and their classmates when they were ready. Many students achieved high marks in their assessment for singing the

minor patterns accurately. Although they may not have been entirely comfortable singing for the class, the movement pattern kept them engaged and focused.

7. **“My Aunt Came Back”** (Kriske & DeLelles, 2006). This song was chosen because of its combination of cumulative movement and singing. It is sung in a *call and response form*, with the teacher singing the call and the students singing the response. All students participated in the cumulative movement, but not all students sang actively. The cumulative movement requires much concentration, which may have been why fewer students sang actively. I feel that with repetition, students would begin to engage more actively in the singing portion of this song.
8. **“Tony Chestnut”** (Thompson, 2019). I learned this action song in a previous teaching position and chose it because of the challenge it presented to sing and do actions simultaneously. In the past, students have found the wordplay to be quite humorous. Students in classes 3S and 3J learned this song, but due to time constraints, students in class 2/3C did not learn it. See the lyrics and the actions in Table A1 below.

Table A1

Lyrics and Actions for Tony Chestnut

Lyrics	Actions
Tony Chestnut knows I love you	To= touch toes ny= touch knees chest=touch chest nut= touch head knows= touch nose I= point to eyes love=put hands in the shape of a heart in front of chest you= point out with both hands

Tony knows, Tony knows	To= touch toes ny= touch knees knows= touch nose To= touch toes ny= touch knees knows= touch nose
Tony Chestnut knows I love you	To= touch toes ny= touch knees chest=touch chest nut= touch head knows= touch nose I= point to eyes love=put hands in the shape of a heart in front of chest you= point out with both hands
That's what Tony knows	That's what= clap twice To= touch toes ny= touch knees knows= touch nose

Students enjoyed the movements, wordplay, and the challenge to continually increase the tempo of the song. However, some students were not pleased that they were singing the words “I love you”. I found that students seemed engaged with the movements, but were not as engaged with the singing portion of the song. This may have been due to lack of familiarity with the text. As in “Letters and Shapes”, “Billy”, and “My Aunt Came Back”, I concluded that it was difficult for most students to sing and do the actions at the same time, resulting in less engagement in singing.

9. **“Rattlesnake”** (Choksy, 1999). I chose this song to teach low la, an outcome set out in the Manitoba Music Curriculum (Government of Manitoba, 2011). The elements of suspense and surprise in the lyrics helped to engage the students. It also tied into their interests in animals.

10. “Rattlesnake Skipping Song” (Sills, 1995). This song was chosen to reinforce sixteenth notes, another outcome set out in the Manitoba Music Curriculum (Government of Manitoba, 2011). It also provided opportunities to reinforce the concept of ostinato and part singing. This song used rhythmic speech with a clapping pattern. It is similar to a tongue twister and students remained engaged trying to master it. The clapping pattern also helped students to focus and engage in this music activity. This song related to many students’ expressed interests in animals.

To promote student engagement when learning to perform the song in parts, I used a game called “Confuse a Kid” (shared with me by my critical friend). If groups did not get confused and maintained their part when speaking the song in canon, their group got a point. If they did get confused, I (the teacher), got a point. This competitive element increased student engagement and students were quite successful singing and maintaining their parts after two or three rounds of the game.

11. “Sweetly Sings the Donkey” (Barron, 1993). I chose this silly song because of its playful nature. Its theme also related to many students’ interests in animals. It reinforced round singing skills and provided single-sex singing opportunities for the students. Funny videos of donkeys singing (Re gon, 2018) were used to provide context for the song.

12. “Tingalayo” (Cavoukian, 1995). This folk song, performed by the children’s entertainer Raffi, was chosen to allow experimentation with differing accompanying instruments. It features three chords, which made it a song that I could accompany on various string instruments and piano. Students sang this song with baritone ukulele, soprano ukulele, guitar, piano, and drums. In small groups, students took turns accompanying the song

using tubano drums. I played all other forms of accompaniment. In class discussions, many students indicated a preference for singing with guitar accompaniment.

This song was also chosen because its theme related to students' interests in animals. Its Caribbean style related to Kristopher's expressed interest in learning about Jamaica. Students enjoyed the song's Caribbean feel, as well as creating their own dance moves to accompany the song. Most students were actively engaged in singing this song.

13. **“Hullamackadoo”** (Geoghegan, 2017). This song was taught to students in classes 3S and 3J. Due to time constraints, class 2/3C did not have the opportunity to learn it. This song was chosen because of the text in a mixture of Gaelic and English. Since the Gaelic words were unfamiliar, their combinations were unexpected. I thought the students might find the words engaging. It was also chosen because it is written in a minor tonality. With this song, students had the opportunity to add a simple drum accompaniment in small groups. The music included suggestions for an accompanying movement pattern, which I adapted for this grade level. Although students showed interest in the context of the song (sung while women were working at the spinning wheel) and its origin (Scotland), this was not a song that students asked to sing again. The movement pattern, along with the text, was beyond the level of challenge that this group could master in a short period of time. The song also features a strong feminine perspective, which may have been uncomfortable for some male students.

14. **“Play Ball”** (Donnelly & Strid, 2013). Many students wrote about their interests in sports on the MLP II. This song provided the opportunity for students to sing about a seasonal sport, while developing their partner song skills. Many students engaged in the singing of this song, as the first section was a song with which they were already familiar. Students

had sung “Take Me Out to the Ball Game” in Physical Education classes over the years.

Although developing their skills, students were successful when singing both parts of the partner song simultaneously. With more time, this song could have also provided students with single-sex singing opportunities.

15. **“I’m a Bone-Legged Chicken”** (Brumfield, 2006). This song was chosen as a *just for fun* song. Xavier had commented that he would enjoy singing songs about bodily functions. This song gave students the opportunity to make belching noises and as soon as students realized they could belch in the song, they became very energized and excited. They asked to sing this song repeatedly. Students also had the opportunity to create their own movement patterns to accompany the words. They nicknamed this song “The Burping Song”. The experience of singing this song strongly impacted grade 3 and 2/3 students, which was evidenced by the sharing of this song with students in other grades outside of music class. It was talked about so much outside of class that students in higher grades began to ask if they could sing it too.
16. **“Once an Austrian Went Yodelling”** (Kriske & DeLelles, 2007). This is a folk song with cumulative actions. It had been suggested to me by the school’s guidance counsellor as an opportunity for students to sing and be silly. Many students enjoyed the challenge of the cumulative words and actions. This was demonstrated through their active participation in the actions and accompanying sound effects. The school guidance counsellor was able to join class 3S in the singing of this song, which made them even more engaged in singing it. To make the most of the remaining time in the study, I introduced this song using a video file created by Muffin Songs (2006).